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TUDOR  
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## CATHOLICISM IN THE TUDOR AGE

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Three Female Catholic  
Saints

A Taste of Sandwich

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BY CERI CREFFIELD

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# CATHOLICISM IN THE TUDOR AGE

No reading recommendation on Tudor Catholicism would be complete without mentioning Eamon Duffy's "The Stripping of the Altars." This enormous tome by Cambridge University Professor of the History of Christianity is justly regarded as one of the great works of revisionist history by being among the first to successfully challenge the centuries-long idea that the rise of Protestantism in England was both inevitable and widely popular.

For the great Catholic queens in Britain at the time, Linda Porter's biography of Mary I and Antonia Fraser's on Mary, Queen of Scots are both superb on showing how Catholicism shaped, and was shaped by, the lives of its highborn supporters. For how the wider population fared, try Stephanie Mann's "Supremacy and Survival" or Jessie Childs' "God's Traitors".

If you're looking for some good fiction exploring the 16th-century British Catholic experience, then try Nancy Bilyeau's trilogy, "The Crown", "The Chalice" and "The Tapestry", or Margaret George's epic novel "Mary, Queen of Scotland and the Isles".

**GARETH RUSSELL**  
**EDITOR**



# Tudor Life



**4** His Most Catholic Majesty?: Philip II's faith collides with politics  
by James Baresel

**10** Extreme Weather During Tudor Times  
by Susan Abernethy

**14** Thomas More Quiz  
by Catherine Brooks

**16** Catholicism in the Tudor Age - Confinement & Birth rituals  
by Gayle Hulme

**19** Editor's Pics  
by Gareth Russell

**20** Three Female Catholic Saints  
by Sarah-Beth Watkins

**23** Guest Speakers  
Ashley Risk and Laura Loney

**24** The Tudors and the Tower of London  
by Roland Hui



# JANUARY

**32** Six Catholic Martyrs  
by Gareth Russell

**36** Parish Church Music in Pre-Reformation Tudor England  
by Jane Moulder

**44** The Tudor New Year Gifts  
by Elizabeth Jane Timms

**52** Tudor Royalty Experience  
by Ceri Creffield

**62** A Taste of Sandwich  
by Toni Mount

**69** Members' Bulletin  
by Tim Ridgway

**70** "Elizabeth I's Last Favourite" | "Cecily"  
Reviews by Charlie Fenton

**72** Food as gifts in Tudor England  
by Brigitte Webster



# HIS MOST CATHOLIC MAJESTY? PHILIP II'S FAITH COLLIDES WITH POLITICS

BY JAMES BARESEL

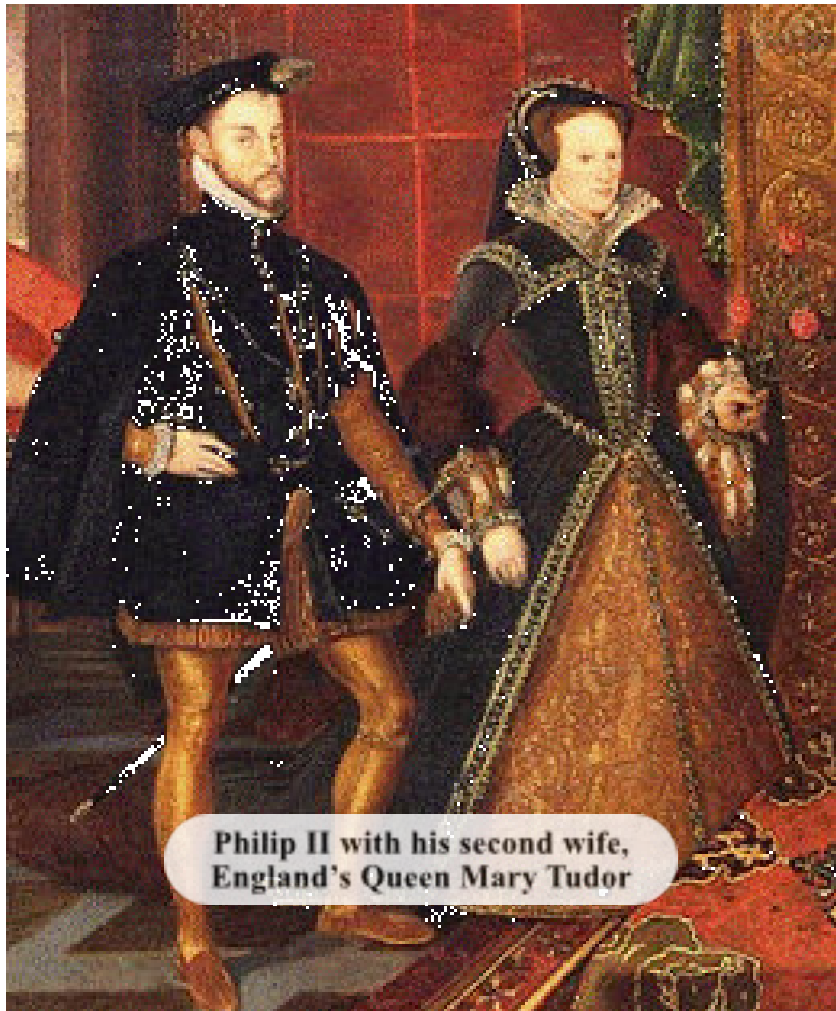


Imagine a man who assured Elizabeth Tudor's succession, almost incurred excommunication for invading the Papal States, helped the Protestant Lords of the Congregation consolidate their hold on Scotland, prioritized invading Catholic kingdoms over combating Protestant powers and was distrusted by some of the most devout of the high-ranking Catholic clergy of his day. Imagining him isn't actually necessary. He really existed. And generation after generation of English Protestants have depicted him as a leading Catholic—King Philip II of Spain... James Baresel investigates

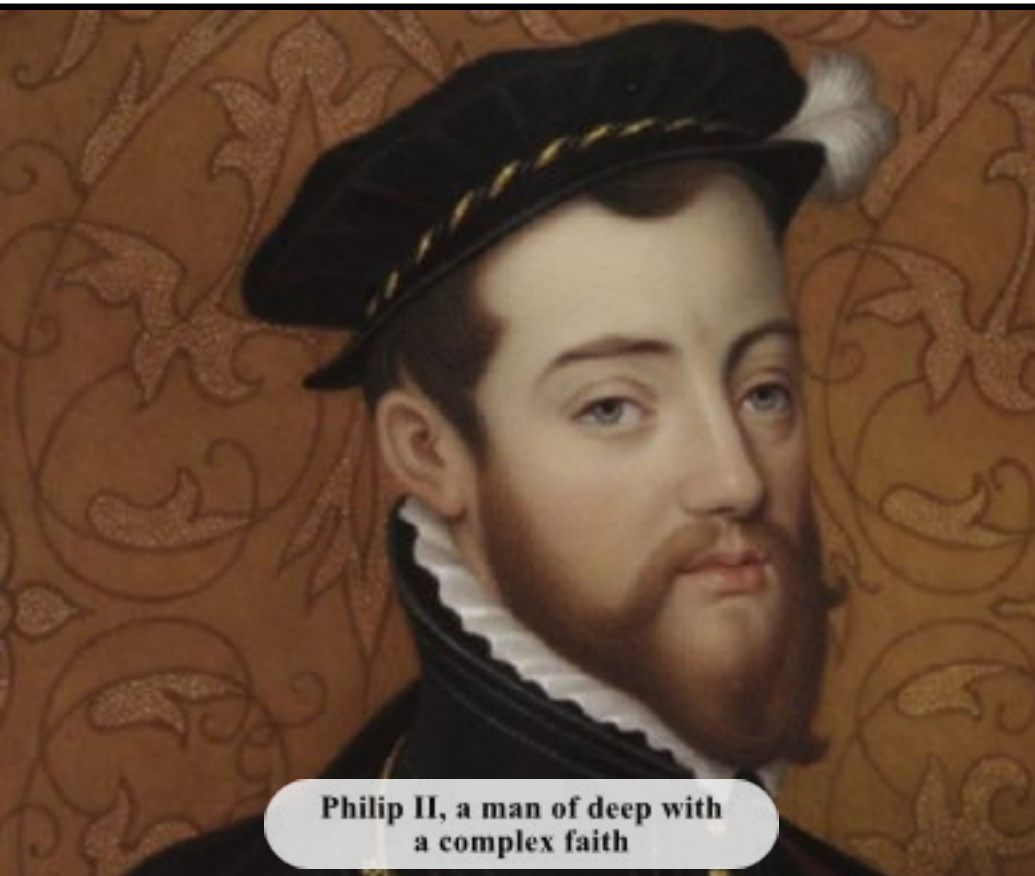
Despite persistent myths, Philip's ambivalent Catholicism characterized his relationship with Tudor England from beginning to end. His wedding ceremony with Queen Mary Tudor actually took place under the auspices of non-Catholic clergy. At the time it occurred the queen had restored the quasi-Catholic form of the Church of England that had been created by King Henry VIII (and replaced by outright Protestantism after his death). Marriage by an Anglican cleric that had still not reconciled with the Vatican was a state of affairs a staunch Catholic would never have accepted. Reunion with the papacy came later and was shortly followed by Philip's invasion of the Papal States and Mary's defiance of papal authority over the power of its legates. Mary even brought England into the war on the anti-papal side, not directly but by initiating hostilities with Pope Paul IV's chief

ally, France.

Prioritization of international power politics over religious concerns also motivated Philip's approach towards the English succession and the affairs of



Philip II with his second wife, England's Queen Mary Tudor



Philip II, a man of deep with  
a complex faith

Burgundy for support against France—their daughter Joanna married a Burgundian duke, just as their daughter Catherine of Aragon married first Prince Arthur Tudor and then Henry VIII - and their grandson Philip later married Mary I. From Philip's perspective, ensuring that such historic alliances survived Mary I's death required two things.

First: Queen Mary Stuart, better known as Mary, Queen of Scots,

Scotland. The two dominant (and rival) European powers were both Catholic—the House of Habsburg and France. Philip was a Habsburg whose father had been Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (an elected role with limited authority), Archduke of Austria (in which capacity he more fully ruled the Habsburgs' hereditary German territories), king of Spain (as Charles I), of Naples, of Sicily and of Sardinia, and Duke of Burgundy (an independent duchy that had actually lost control of Burgundy proper but still ruled the Netherlands). Charles made his brother Ferdinand heir to his German territories and arranged his election as emperor. Most of Charles's other domains, including Spain and the Netherlands, went to Philip.

Philip intended his relationship with England to perpetuate older anti-French alliances. The Duchy of Burgundy had been England's ally during the Hundred Years' War. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain later turned to England and

could not be allowed to rule England. The Scottish monarch virtually embodied her country's historical "auld alliance" with France. Daughter of a king of Scots and a French noblewoman, Mary had lived in France since childhood and was betrothed to the Dauphin. Should the forthcoming marriage produce a male heir and Mary become established on England's throne, France and the British Isles would become a monolith.

Second: England had to be united enough to serve as an ally. An England divided by civil war would be useless for Philip's purposes.

Those favoring a Catholic successor to Mary Tudor were divided between three candidates. Leaving aside Elizabeth, the two senior Tudor descendants were both Catholic. Mary Stuart was the most senior. Margaret, Lady Lennox, was next in line, but English—and some argued a Scot could not succeed to the English throne. Others argued neither





**Saint Teresa of Ávila, who opposed Philip's conquest of Portugal**

heiress was legally qualified, since descendants of their Tudor ancestor (Princess Margaret) had been demoted in the line of succession by Henry VIII's will. (An act of parliament authorized King Henry to determine the succession to his descendants in that manner but whether the will had been signed in accordance with the act's stipulations has been disputed.) Lady Katherine Grey was next in seniority and, despite being the sister of the strictly Protestant Lady Jane Grey, was thought to have had Catholic sympathies.

In contrast to this, Elizabeth had one large base of support that had actually played a major role in securing power for Mary Tudor in 1553—people whose primary concern was not religion but stability and succession by the hereditary seniority they believed would assure it. For them that meant succession by the most senior descendant who had been born within some “form of marriage.” Concerns

about what was and was not a “valid marriage” (or whether or not the will of Henry VIII had been “properly signed”) were ignored. Such questions could lead to succession disputes and perhaps civil war.

On that basis Philip II was determined that nothing could be allowed to interfere with a smooth transition of power from Mary to Elizabeth. He prevented serious investigation into whether or not Elizabeth was linked to the Wyatt Rebellion against her sister's government. He ensured that Queen Mary's preference for succession by Lady Lennox never became a serious possibility. After Mary's death, he took steps to delay formal papal condemnation of Elizabeth for over a decade.

Once Elizabeth's power was established, the one remaining threat to King Philip's plan was Mary Stuart—who still lived in France, while her



mother Mary of Guise (acting as Scotland's regent) faced rebellion by the Protestant Lords of the Congregation. After the Scottish royalists' position was destroyed by the intervention of an English army allied to the rebel lords and the regent's death, agents of Philip II took part in negotiations that included representatives of England, the rebels and the Queen of Scots—whose nominal envoys actually acted on behalf of her Guise uncles and whose priority was extricating France from Scottish affairs. The resulting Treaty of Edinburgh turned Scotland over to the Lord of the Congregation until such time as their queen returned. It was also agreed that England could re-intervene if Scottish affairs if the treaty was not ratified by Queen Mary—who unsurprisingly refused ratification, while the Spanish king's agents had consented to the agreement.

Half a decade later Philip faced a rebellion in the Netherlands that gradually led to direct war between Spain and England. Much of the impetus for the rebellion was provided by Protestantism but its initial success was facilitated by widespread Catholic opposition to increased taxation, centralization, reduction of traditional freedoms and heavy-handed authoritarianism. Only after the (literally and figuratively) violent anti-Catholicism of the rebels drove Dutch Catholics to come to terms with the king did the conflict become more strictly confessional.

Almost from the beginning of that conflict, England (initially in limited and intermittent ways) supported the Dutch rebellion and committed hostile acts against Spain. English pirates raided Spanish ships under Elizabeth's

protection. Money and soldiers were sent to aid the rebels. When in 1568 Spanish ships transporting treasure to Philip's army in the Netherlands were driven into an English port by stormy weather the treasure was appropriated by Elizabeth's government. By the mid-1570s the popes were urging Philip to invade England in response to the persecution of English Catholics, to English support of Protestant military efforts in the Netherlands and France and to the imprisonment of Queen Mary Stuart. The Spanish king refused, fearful that war with England might give Catholic France and opportunity to move into power vacuum in the Netherlands. Then in 1578 he turned his attention to Portugal, whose new king was an elderly cardinal of the Catholic Church with no clear successor. Philip unsuccessfully maneuvered for the succession, then launched an invasion upon King Henry's death in 1580 (against the firm opposition of the prominent Spanish Catholic reformer Saint Teresa of Ávila).

It was only in 1585 that Philip decided to confront England directly—two years after his conquest of Portugal was complete and two decades after Elizabeth's government had become a thorn in his side. The devout Pope Sixtus V (a protege of Saint Pius V, the pope who had excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570) was so distrustful of Philip that it took months for the highly respected English Cardinal Allen to convince him to support Spanish invasion of England. Even then Sixtus refused to support that invasion until Philip agreed that, in the event of success, England would remain an independent kingdom under a monarch approved by the pope.



Sixtus had more than ample reason to distrust Philip—and not just because the king's foreign policies consistently prioritized Spanish power over the freedom of Catholics living in Protestant ruled countries. The (perhaps surprising) truth is that there was little difference between the degree of practical control over ecclesial matters that Philip and Elizabeth desired to exercise. The difference is that while Elizabeth opposed Catholic doctrines and broke with the papacy, Philip professed Catholic doctrine and wanted popes who would rubber stamp his own decisions. With the boundaries of his territories, Philip's dominance of the Church was comparable to that exercised by Henry VIII while he remained a Catholic (and which greatly facilitated his later break with the papacy).

The state of Catholicism in Philip's Spain is exemplified by the Spanish Inquisition's condemnation of a volume of Cardinal Caesar Baronius's *Ecclesiastical Annals*. Baronius was a member of the Congregation of the Oratory (a new community of priests that was reviving Catholic life among the inhabitants of Rome) and discipline of its founder, Saint Philip Neri. His twelve volume *Ecclesiastical Annals* was the first comprehensive history of the Catholic Church during the 1st Millennium and remains highly respected for its scholarship and erudition. The work had been undertaken at the request of Saint Philip Neri, was highly favored by the popes of the day and approved by the Roman Inquisition (not to be confused with the Spanish one). It also defended the autonomy of the Catholic Church from control by secular rulers—and

autonomy that was then being attacked in a book endorsed by one of Spain's Inquisitors but condemned by the Roman Inquisition.

By the time that theological conflict was taking place, the Armada had recently been defeated and Philip II had turned away from England to focus on what was to be his last major foreign policy agenda—the French royal succession. His participation in this conflict began as an intervention on behalf of Catholicism and ended in a power play against a Catholic monarch.

King Henri III of France had died in 1589, leaving the Protestant Henri of Navarre (King Henri IV) as senior heir to the French throne. France's Catholic League—and association of powerful nobles—refused to accept a Protestant monarch and allied to Philip II. Soon Philip was working to have his daughter Isabel made queen of France in defiance of that country's law. Then in 1593 Henri of Navarre announced his intention to reconcile with the Catholic Church. Most French Catholics were satisfied. Philip, however, spent the next two years impeding papal absolution of Henri that Pope Clement VIII finally decided to grant in December of 1595.

Philip continued fighting until the defeat of his forces at the 1597 Siege of Amiens forced him to make a peace. In May 1598 his representatives recognized Henri IV as king of France in the Treaty of Vervins, the main architect of which was a papal legate. Philip died three months later after a life that (in the words of Catholic priest and history professor Monsignor Philip Hughes) “wrecked the political side of the Counter-Reformation.”

**JAMES BARESE**





Pope Sixtus V





Susan Abernethy talks about...



# Extreme Weather During Tudor Times

**THE LIVES OF PEOPLE DURING THE TUDOR ERA WERE DEPENDENT ON THE WEATHER.** Day-to-day, countless hours were spent just to keep warm, finding firewood and keeping the fire alight. Let's take a look at some incidences of extreme weather during the Tudor era. In late winter/early spring of 1502, the weather was abnormally wet and cold in the Welsh marshes. At Ludlow Castle, Prince Arthur of Wales and his new bride, Catherine of Aragon succumbed to the "sweating sickness" or possibly a virulent flu. As we know, Arthur died but Catherine survived to marry Arthur's brother, the future Henry VIII.

The freezing of the Thames River is believed to have been aided if not actually caused by the structure of Old London Bridge after 1176 AD. The original bridge consisted of nineteen arches and twenty piers supported by large breakwaters called 'starlings'. This structure acted as a weir, more or less preventing tides and salt water from passing that point. When chunks of ice got caught between the breakwaters, the flow of the river above the bridge slowed, making it more likely to freeze over. After the opening of the five arched New London Bridge in 1831, the Thames never froze again.

In the early winter of 1506, England experienced a severe frost, freezing the Thames River solid throughout the month of January, so much so, a horse and cart could easily cross. The "Chronicles of the Grey Friars of London" has an entry that reads "Such a sore snow and a frost that men might go with carts over the Thames and horses, and it lasted toll Candlemas." Even the

sea was frozen in Marseille, France, suggesting a strong east wind removed heat from the water.

In that same month, a major wind storm affected at least the southern half of Britain and the southern North Sea. The wind caused damage to St. Paul's Cathedral and other buildings in London. While sailing to Spain, Archduke Philip and his wife, Juana, Queen of Castile were blown ashore near Weymouth and Henry VII entertained them for three months at Windsor Castle and Richmond Palace. The Treaty of Windsor was negotiated during their stay whereby Henry recognized Philip as King of Castile and the two rulers promised mutual defense and assistance against each other's rebels.

July 21, 1513 is known as 'Hot Wednesday' as several people were killed by excessive heat. "Fabian's Chronicle says that in 1515, the Thames was frozen so hard that carriages of all sorts passed easily



between Lambeth and Westminster. One chronicler mentions the frost and snow were so severe that five arches of London Bridge were borne down and carried away with the stream. In 1516, there was drought, with very little rain falling for nine months. The Thames froze again in January 1517 and there was excessive heat the same year. This extreme weather may have created tinderbox conditions that led to the strife of the Evil May Day Riots.

Frostbite and deaths from the cold occurred in November 1523. The years 1527/1528 saw excessive rain. From April 12 to June 3, rain fell every day. The Thames flooded in October 1529. The years 1530-1560 saw a downturn in temperatures and probably helped to encourage the use of glass in windows for those who could afford it. During December 1536 and January 1537, the Thames was so frozen, King Henry VIII and his queen, Jane Seymour, rode on the ice-bound river from London to Greenwich. June of 1545 saw fist sized stones of hail in Lancashire.

Queen Mary I couldn't catch a break during her reign. The year 1555 was extremely wet. Westminster flooded after a great storm of wind and rain in October and 1556 saw such severe drought, there was a six-fold increase in the quarterly price of wheat. Even some of the fresh water springs in England failed. The summer of 1558 was very hot and there was an epidemic of the flu. Queen Mary herself may have caught the deadly plague as she became ill in August, dying in November.

In the town of Sneyton, Nottinghamshire, a severe thunderstorm with large hail (possibly up to 4.5 inches/12 cm in diameter) destroyed houses and churches. Bells

were thrown into the churchyard and some sheets of lead were carried over one hundred meters. Some accounts say up to seven men were killed. Trees were uprooted and the winds lifted a child and dropped him about thirty meters away. He broke his arm and later died of his injuries.

The steeple of St. Paul's Cathedral was struck by lightning in June 1561, causing fire damage to the church. From December 1564 to January 1565, there was a prolonged frost, lasting six weeks. The entire winter was among the top ten percent of bitterly cold winters in the millennium. Holinshed states that on December 21, "began a frost, which continued so extremely that on New Year's Eve people went over and along the Thames on the ice from London Bridge to Westminster. Some played at the foot-ball as boldly there as if it had been on the dry land; diverse of the court shot daily at pricks set up on the Thames; and the people, both men and women, went on the Thames in greater numbers than in any street of the city of London." Playing sports on the ice had been done before but this was notable because the court of Queen Elizabeth I indulged in the games on the ice at Westminster. Tradition says the Queen herself walked on the ice.

Holinshed continues: "On the 31st day of January, at night, it began to thaw, and on the fifth day was no ice to be seen between London Bridge and Lambeth, which sudden thaw caused great floods and high waters, that bare down bridges and houses, and drowned many people in England." The swift thaw was followed by an unhealthy fog.

Severe winters during the reign of Queen Elizabeth occurred in 1565, 1567, and in general through the early

to mid-1570's. In February 1579, the Thames flooded by melting snow, depositing fish in Westminster Hall. In May of 1579, London was covered in a foot of snow!

In 1587, witchcraft accusations reached new heights. Could the weather have had something to do with this? The extremes of hot dry summers and cold wet winters lead to the decimation of harvests and the specter of starvation. Because bread was the chief source of sustenance, poor harvests meant there was less bread and it was more expensive.

Periods of extreme cold allowed a fungus called ergot to grow in the grain. Some of this fungus would end up in the flour used for baking bread and caused a disease called ergotism, otherwise known as St. Anthony's fire. Symptoms of ergotism included intense burning, muscle twitching, spasms, altered mental states, hallucinations or delusions, sweating and long-term fever. It's believed that witch hunts could be associated with these symptoms. Young girls, who exhibited symptoms of ergotism were accused of controlling the weather and causing crops to fail.

Perhaps the most extreme weather to have a pivotal impact on Tudor history was in the summer of 1588. In July, King Philip II's long-anticipated Spanish Armada sailed from Lisbon through the Bay of Biscay into English waters and was met by squalls of WNW winds and later light westerly winds in the English Channel. The plan consisted of sailing to the Spanish Netherlands to collect the army of

invasion before engaging the English navy but the winds forced the Armada to defeat off the French coast at Gravelines on August 8. The Spanish captains realized they could not make it to the Netherlands, and attempted to escape through the Strait of Dover and north around the British Isles. From August 24 to September 3, severe Atlantic gales completed the break-up of the Armada northwest of Ireland and west of the Hebrides. Contemporary reporters, as well as modern historians, have described the situation for the entire summer of 1588 as 'winter-like'. The weather saved England from invasion by Spain.

The years from 1590-1597 were thought to be the coldest decade of the sixteenth century. These years included uncommon droughts as well, with the Thames River being so low, horsemen could ride across the riverbed near London Bridge. The Thames froze again in 1595, lasting from December to March. An Elizabethan preacher named John King is quoted as saying "Our years are turned upside down, our summers are no summers, our harvests are no harvests".

The next great frost happened in 1608 and lasted off and on from December 8 until February 2. People passed daily in diverse places. All sorts of men and women and children went out on the ice, shot at marks, bowled and danced. Booths were set up for barbers to ply their trade and for vendors to sell fruit, victuals, beer and wine. It must have been a sight to see!

**SUSAN ABERNETHY**

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Further reading:

- "The English Climate" by H.H. Lamb



# THOMAS MORE QUIZ

With this month's theme being Catholicism in the Tudor age, this month's quiz is about Sir Thomas More. Fill in the gaps in the paragraph to test your knowledge on More, and see if you can find the words in the wordsearch.

Thomas More was born on 7th February in either 1477 or 1478, in \_\_\_\_\_ Street, in London. His most famous writings are his unpublished work on Richard III and '\_\_\_\_\_'. But he is probably most well-known for his burning of heretics during the earlier years of the Reformation, and then his execution by his former friend and master, Henry VIII.

More joined the house of John \_\_\_\_\_, Archbishop of Canterbury, before going on to study Latin and Logic at \_\_\_\_\_ University. After this, he then studied Law in London, and we know he had a brilliant mind. He did consider joining the order after staying at the \_\_\_\_\_ Priory, London Charterhouse, from 1499 – 1503, and further considered becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ Monk. But despite his fervours religious beliefs, these were not his final calling. More had children, something he would've been unable to do had he chosen one of these options, and he valued their education very highly. It was unusual for daughters to be given the education his were.

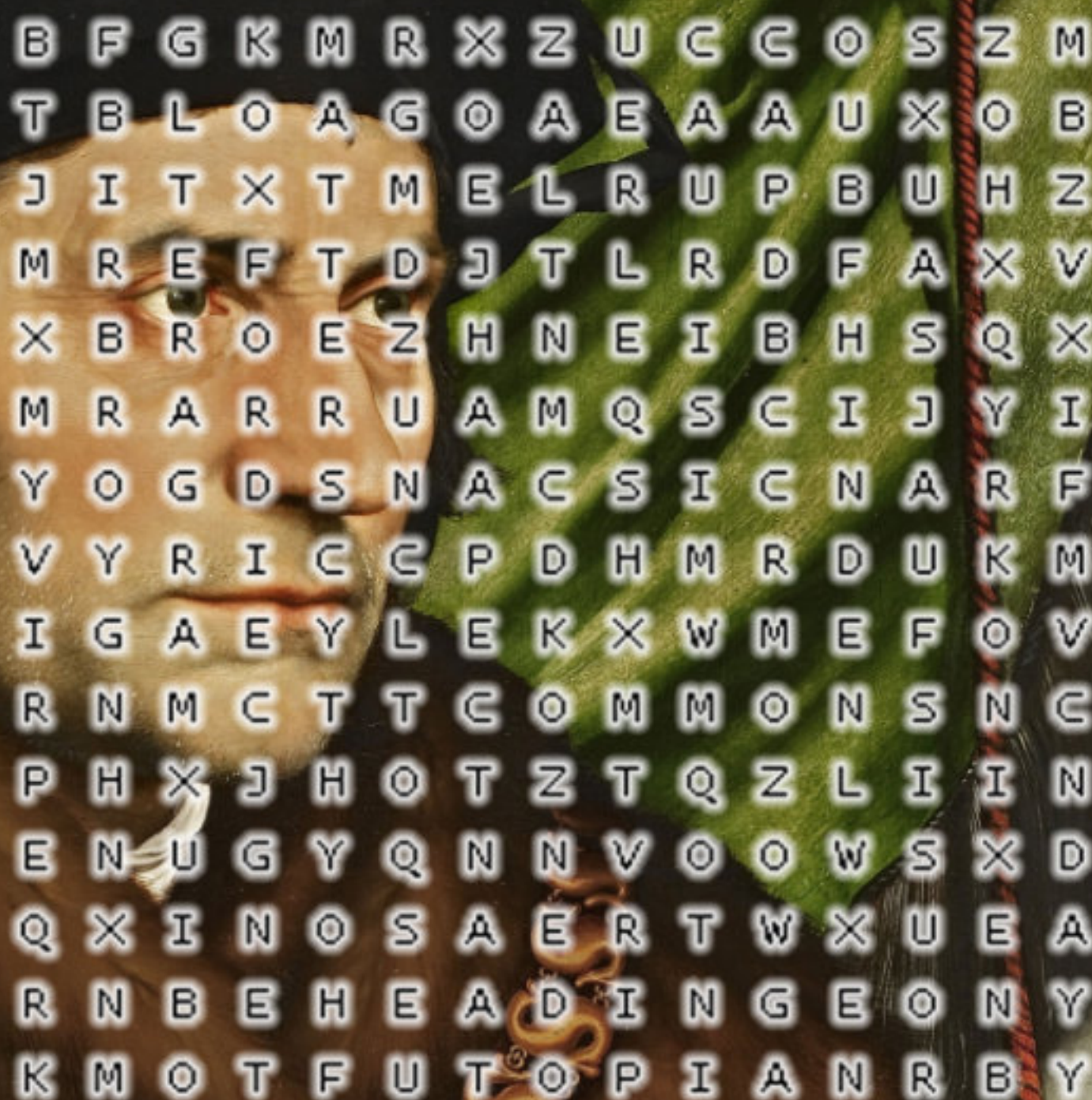
More flew high under Henry VIII, securing a number of positions over the years. These included becoming an MP in 1504, a King's \_\_\_\_\_ in 1517, a \_\_\_\_\_ Councillor in 1518, was \_\_\_\_\_ in 1521, and in 1523, became Speaker of the House of \_\_\_\_\_. His most noted position was probably when he became Henry's Lord Chancellor in 1529, replacing the fallen Cardinal \_\_\_\_\_. But there came a point when More felt that he could no longer support the actions of the king with regard to the Reformation and his Great \_\_\_\_\_, and More resigned as Chancellor in May 1532, returning the seal to his master.

It was his anguish at this situation that led to his end. More denied the \_\_\_\_\_ and refused to take the Oath of Succession. Under the 1534 Treason Act, this made him guilty of High \_\_\_\_\_, and Henry had no choice but to agree to his execution.

More was sentenced to \_\_\_\_\_ on 6th July 1535. The day before, he wrote his final letter to his beloved daughter, \_\_\_\_\_ Roper. She was said to have retrieved his head and carried it with her. More was beheaded on \_\_\_\_\_ Hill.

Sir Thomas More was beatified by the Catholic Church and made a Saint in 1886 and was Canonised in 1935.





A portrait of a man with a black cap and a large green feather. A word search grid is overlaid on his face. The grid consists of 15 rows and 15 columns of letters. The letters are arranged in a way that some words are hidden horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. The man is wearing a gold chain with a large rose pendant.

B	F	G	K	M	R	X	Z	U	C	C	O	S	Z	M
T	B	L	O	A	G	O	A	E	A	A	U	X	O	B
J	I	T	X	T	M	E	L	R	U	P	B	U	H	Z
M	R	E	F	T	D	J	T	L	R	D	F	A	X	V
X	B	R	O	E	Z	H	N	E	I	B	H	S	Q	X
M	R	A	R	R	U	A	M	Q	S	C	I	J	Y	I
Y	O	G	D	S	N	A	C	S	I	C	N	A	R	F
V	Y	R	I	C	C	P	D	H	M	R	D	U	K	M
I	G	A	E	Y	L	E	K	X	W	M	E	F	O	V
R	N	M	C	T	T	C	O	M	M	O	N	S	N	C
P	H	X	J	H	O	T	Z	T	Q	Z	L	I	I	N
E	N	U	G	Y	Q	N	N	V	O	O	W	S	X	D
Q	X	I	N	O	S	A	E	R	T	W	X	U	E	A
R	N	B	E	H	E	A	D	I	N	G	E	O	N	Y
K	M	O	T	F	U	T	O	P	I	A	N	R	B	Y

GOOD LUCK!

Catherine Brooks



# Catholicism in the Tudor Age - Confinement & Birth Rituals.

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**Gayle Hulme** investigates the doctrines and rules of the Roman Catholic Church, and the seven sacraments.

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Whether you were rich or poor in Tudor England, most aspects of your life would have been governed and regulated by the doctrines and rules of the Roman Catholic Church. The seven sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist/Holy Communion, Confirmation, Reconciliation/Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and Ordination existed during the Tudor reigns, and the whole population would have participated in these ecumenical practices in order to 'make people holy, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give to God' (Catholic Online).

Probably the most talked and written about sacrament in the Tudor era was Marriage. In the Catholic Church, marriage was and still is the sacred and indivisible bond between a man and a woman that sees them joined in partnership for their whole life together. When it came to royalty, it was the monarch's duty to marry and provide the country with a legitimate heir to the throne. Tudor queens were expected to produce healthy children, preferably sons for the continuance of the Tudor dynasty. In a superstitious age, this was

not left to chance, and it is the rules and religious conventions surrounding confinement, birth and churching that we will be focusing on here.

Confinement was a custom that saw the royal mother go into a period of female-only seclusion approximately six weeks before the expected arrival of her child. Of course, without our modern methods of dating pregnancy it was difficult to predict when the royal infant would arrive so after attending 'an elaborate service [...] where the Church would ask God for his blessing for the birth' (Bryson 2015) the queen would 'take to their chamber'. The special apartments were arranged in accordance with royal ordinances. Elizabeth of York was the first Tudor queen to enter such a confinement. She took her leave and retreated to the sanctuary of her 'laying in' chambers at Winchester just 8 months after her marriage to Henry VII, where she gave birth to a premature, but healthy son. The rooms which the queen, her ladies and her all female officers would have occupied were organised by the king's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort. The rooms were dark due to the hanging of

heavy tapestries. This was thought to recreate the atmosphere of the womb. In addition to this, the scenes on the walls depicted soothing and calming allegorical scenarios in order not to alarm the queen. The only light allowed into the room came from one uncovered window as 'Draughts and fresh air were not considered healthy for a newborn'. (Licence 2012). Together with the darkness of the room, there would have, regardless of the summer weather, been a fire burning.

Midwives were on hand for the moment when the labour pains began, and as labour in the 15th and 16th was a dangerous occupation the spiritual needs of both the mother and the child had to be provided for. The room would contain religious artefacts, such as crucifixes and cramp rings, which were thought to aid the mother in her time of travail. Any baby thought too weak or sickly to survive the birth would be immediately baptised by the attending midwife. It was believed that anyone unbaptised at the point of death could not be washed of original sin and therefore could not enter the kingdom of heaven. Today, the Catholic Church says that 'God will save infants when we have not been able to do for them what we would have wished to do' (Vatican.VA), but back in the Tudor era the church teachings were that these children were bound to wander in limbo 'neither merit(ing) the beatific vision, nor [...] subject to any punishment, because they are not guilty of any personal sin'. (Vatican.VA). The thought of dying unbaptised was so repugnant that there are even cases of body parts being baptised during difficult births when the infant's life

was considered to be hanging in the balance.

Before a royal lady took to her chamber, she would have attended a church service to pray for the safe delivery of her child, for strength to bear the ordeal and for her own survival. At this time, she would take Holy Communion. Once closeted away in her chambers, the expectant mother would have to rely on devotional texts, religious artefacts and prayers to the Virgin Mary for her spiritual needs. A woman of royal or noble status would not be allowed to receive the Eucharist until she had been 'churched'. This usually took place around 3 or 4 weeks after delivery. The woman would proceed to the church porch with 'a lighted candle [and] thank God for the safe delivery of her child and receive a blessing from the priest' (Lewis 2013).

The role of saints and pilgrimages played an import part in conception, birth and survival in the Tudor era. If you read enough English royal history books, websites or texts which touch on childbirth you will eventually come across a place called Our Lady of Walsingham. Located between Norwich and King's Lynn in Norfolk, this place of pilgrimage was built in 1061 during the reign of Edward the Confessor.

Through the following centuries, English kings and queens frequently visited it. Originally, the shrine stood by itself, but it later became enclosed in a wooden priory. This religious house was run by an order of Augustinian Canons until its dissolution and destruction on the orders of Henry VIII in the 1530s.

So just what made this Our Lady of Walsingham so popular with Henry



VII, his son Henry VIII and their respective queens? The answer lies in the legend that surrounds the original building.

The legend stated that the Virgin Mary had appeared before Richeldis, who was the widow of the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham. The Virgin Mary transported Richeldis in spirit to the exact spot of the Annunciation in Nazareth, where the Angel Gabriel had appeared before Mary to tell her she would bear the Son of God and that she should name him Jesus. Mary instructed Richeldis to take down exact measurements of what she saw in order that an exact replica of the Holy House could be built in England. It was for this reason that the house became known as England's Nazareth.

Richeldis, being a generous Christian and devout follower of the Virgin Mary, supplied the materials and pondered where to tell the carpenters to build the house. The answer came after two heavy days of dew. When only two dry areas remained after the dew, Richeldis took this as sign that Mary wished the house to be constructed on the ground between two wells.

One of the dry patches was chosen, but try as they might the carpenters could not manage to build the house. They reported their failure and despair

to Recheldis, whose solution was to seek divine guidance in a vigil of overnight prayer.

It seems her prayers were answered, as, according to legend, a miracle was performed overnight. By sunrise the house had been completed, albeit in the other dry patch of ground and the Walsingham legend was born.

On reviewing the legend, it starts to emerge why English Queens often went on pilgrimage to visit Our Lady at Walsingham. Being a replica of the house where the Virgin Mary had received the news that she was to bear a son, what better place to either pray for a child or to give thanks for one?

Henry VIII's first wife, Katherine of Aragon visited the shrine, and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, mentioned it in February 1533 when hinting at her secret marriage to the king. She publicly told her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, 'that if she was not pregnant by Easter, she would make a pilgrimage to pray to Our Lady of Walsingham'

In a superstitious age, where maternal survival was poor and infant mortality rampant, it was critical for the continuity of the Tudor dynasty that religious customs and observances were strictly adhered to.

**GAYLE HULME**

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No reading recommendation on Tudor Catholicism would be complete without mentioning Eamon Duffy's "The Stripping of the Altars." This enormous tome by Cambridge University Professor of the History of Christianity is justly regarded as one of the great works of revisionist history by being among the first to successfully challenge the centuries-long idea that the rise of Protestantism in England was both inevitable and widely popular.

For the great Catholic queens in Britain at the time, Linda Porter's biography of Mary I and Antonia Fraser's on Mary, Queen of Scots are both superb on showing how Catholicism shaped, and was shaped by, the lives of its highborn supporters. For how the wider population fared, try Stephanie Mann's "Supremacy and Survival" or Jessie Childs' "God's Traitors".

If you're looking for some good fiction exploring the 16th-century British Catholic experience, then try Nancy Bilyeau's trilogy, "The Crown", "The Chalice" and "The Tapestry", or Margaret George's epic novel "Mary, Queen of Scotland and the Isles".

**GARETH RUSSELL**



# Three Female Catholic Saints

**T**he Forty Martyrs of England and Wales are a group of Catholics who were executed between 1535 and 1679. Of the forty, three are women who gave their lives for their faith.

Margaret Clitherow was born around 1556 to Thomas and Jane Middleton. In 1571, she married John Clitherow, a butcher and a chamberlain for York who was supportive of her when she converted to Catholicism in 1574, so supportive that he even paid her fines when she refused to attend church. She was imprisoned three times in York Castle for her failure to attend and one of her children William was born in gaol.

Margaret provided safety for Catholic priests in the North, both at her home and at a house she rented and enabled them to say Mass. Known as the 'Pearl of York', she risked everything to

maintain her faith. But she came under suspicion when her oldest son was sent to train for the priesthood at the English College, a Catholic seminary, in Douai (and later Rheims), France.

When her house was searched, the location of a priest hole was discovered and Margaret was arrested. She appeared before the York assizes for her role in providing Catholic priests a safe house but she refused to plead guilty or otherwise, and was sentenced to death.

On 25 March 1586, she was executed even though she was pregnant. At the Toll Booth at Ouse Bridge, she endured one of the most barbaric forms of capital punishment.

Blindfolded and stripped naked, she was made to lay down with a sharp fist-sized rock under her back. A door, said to be the one from her own house, was put on top of her and piled high with stones and rocks, crushing her and breaking her back. It took her fifteen minutes to die.



Saint  
Margaret Clitherow



She was canonised in 1970 by Pope Paul VI as was Anne Line and Margaret Ward.

Anne Line was born around 1563 as Alice Higham, the eldest daughter of the Puritan William Higham of Jenkyn Maldon. In the early 1580s she converted to Catholicism and took the name Anne. At the same time her brother and a man called Roger Line who would become her husband also converted. Roger was later arrested for attending Mass and he fled to Flanders where he died in 1594.

Anne, newly widowed, became acquainted with John Gerard, a Catholic priest who worked secretly for the faith in England, and would later write *The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*, about the perils of life as a Catholic man of the cloth. Whilst he was imprisoned, she managed his house and hiding place for many.

In Gerard's autobiography he wrote:

*After my escape from prison [Anne Line] gave up managing the house. By then she was known to so many people that it was unsafe for me to frequent any house she occupied. Instead she hired apartments in another building and continued to shelter priests there. One day, however (it was the Purification of Our Blessed Lady), she allowed in an unusually large number of Catholics to hear Mass... Some neighbours noticed the crowd and the constables were at the house at once*

Anne was arrested during the raid and sent to Newgate Prison. On 26 February 1601 she was brought to her trial on a chair as she was so sick with fever she could not stand. She made no apology for her actions and told the judge, Sir John Popham, that she only wished she could have saved a thousand more priests. She was

sentenced to be hanged.

On 27 February 1601 she was executed along with two priests, Roger Filcock and Mark Barkworth, who were also drawn and quartered. Before her death she told the gathered crowd 'I am sentenced to die for harbouring a Catholic priest, and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish, with all my soul, that where I have entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand'.



Statue of St Anne Line



Margaret Ward was born around 1550. Originally from Cheshire, she entered the service of a noble lady in London. It was here she heard of the plight of Richard Watson, a priest confined at Bridewell Prison, who had been starved and shackled. She decided she would help him initially by visiting with parcels of food.

His gaolers grew so used to seeing her that after a time they no longer searched her or checked the provisions she was taking in, making it easy for her to smuggle in a rope. Watson used the rope to escape his prison and met with Margaret who had arranged for a boat to take him to safety. When the boatman refused to help the runaway priest, Margaret quickly engaged John Roche, another boatman, who swapped clothes with Watson and agreed to row the priest to safety. Watson got away but both Margaret and Roche were arrested.

Margaret was imprisoned and kept in irons for eight days. She was also whipped and questioned as to the priest's whereabouts but she refused to tell her torturers where Watson had gone. Like Anne Line, she refused to apologise or beg for mercy saying she had 'delivered an innocent lamb from the hands of those bloody wolves'. She was offered a

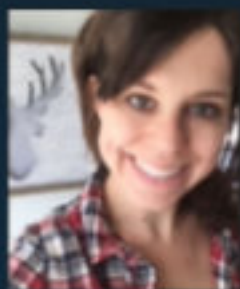
pardon on the condition she attended a Protestant church service but she refused. On 30 August 1588, she was hanged at Tyburn along with John Roche.

Although the forty martyrs share a day of remembrance, the three women have their own feast day on 30 August when their sacrifice is honoured.

**SARAH-BETH  
WATKINS**



# JANUARY EXPERTS LAURA LONEY & ASHLEY RISK



RE-IDENTIFICATION  
OF A  
ROYAL TUDOR  
PORTRAIT  
THE  
TUDOR  
SOCIETY

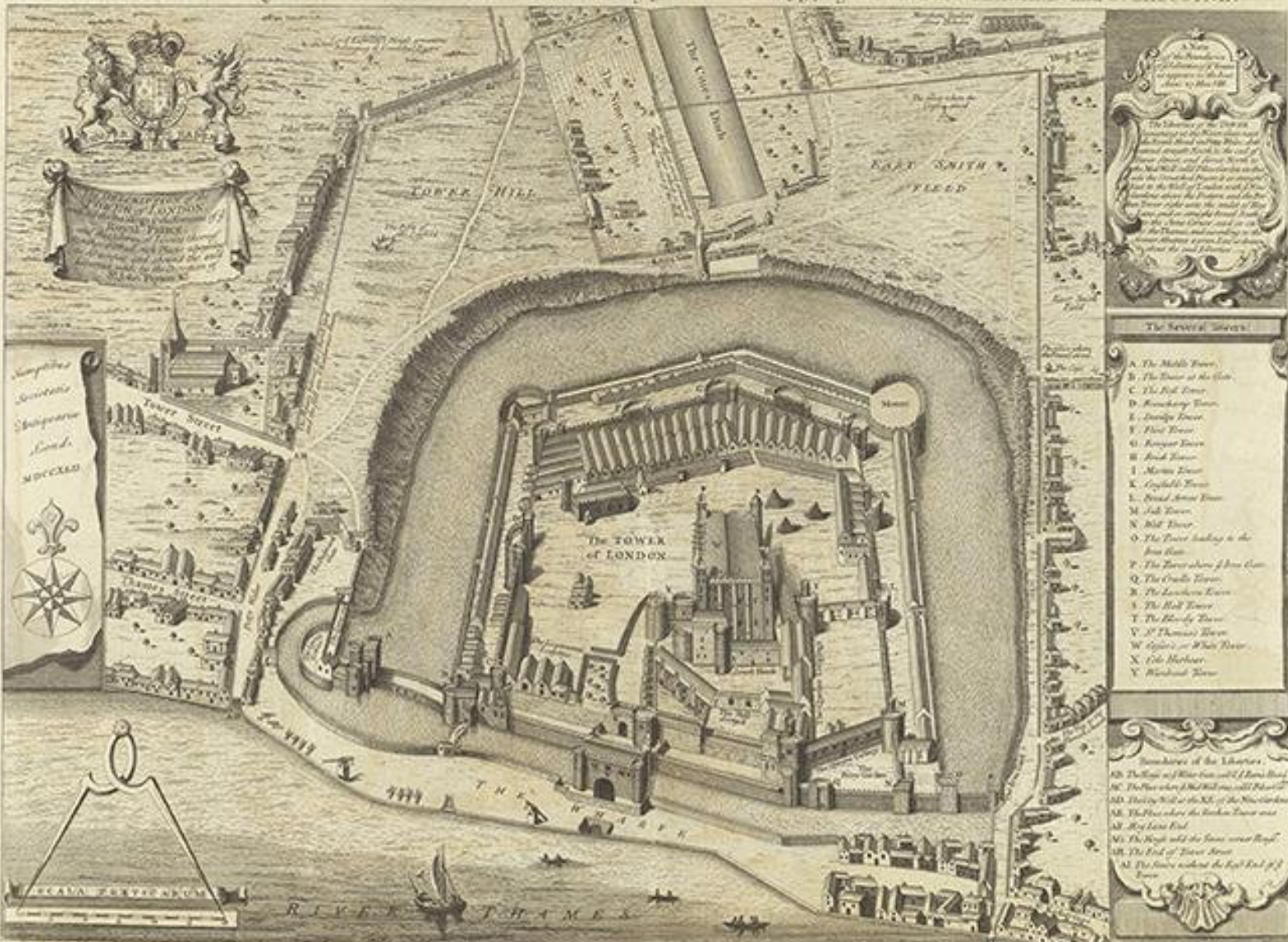




# The Tudors and the Tower of London

*By Roland Hui*

A True and Exact Draught of the TOWER LIBERTIES, surveyd in the Year 1597 by GULIELMUS HAIWARD and J. GASCOYNE.



Survey Map of the Tower of London,  
1597 (by Haiward and Gascoyne)

In its history of over 900 years, the Tower of London is often popularly associated with the Tudor dynasty (1485-1603). This series of buildings on the River Thames - a fortress, a palace, a prison, a mint, and even a zoo - all collectively known as 'the Tower' was the backdrop of notable events in the 16th century and the royal individuals associated with these continue to fascinate us even today.

The first Tudor monarch to visit the Tower was King Henry VII, the founder of the royal House. Shortly after he defeated and killed Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, putting an end to the long conflict of the 'War of the Roses' between the rival Houses of Lancaster and York, it was said that he went to the Tower to greet his fiancée Elizabeth of York<sup>1</sup>. By their marriage, the rival families were united and a new regal succession was established.

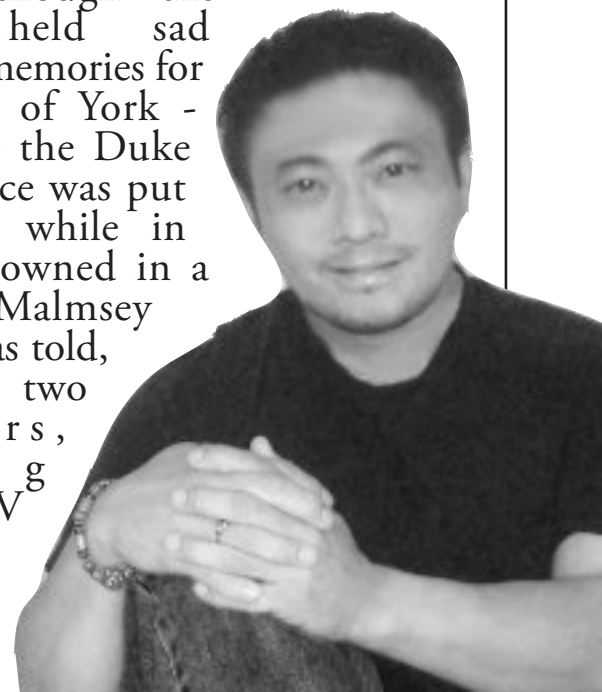
For his coronation that autumn, Henry followed tradition by lodging at the Tower of London before the ceremony at Westminster Abbey. In the medieval era, the monarch's private rooms were situated in the King's Tower, also known as the Lanthorn Tower (now a 19th century recreation) along the southern inner curtain wall. This was where 'the king is accustomed to lie' according to an old description.<sup>2</sup> After a few days rest, Henry 'with great pomp was conveyed to Westminster, and there the thirty day of October was with all ceremonies accustomed, anointed, and crowned king.'<sup>3</sup>

Henry VII made good use of the great castle during his reign. In 1501, he added a new tower (next to the Lanthorn Tower) to the outer

curtain wall. Inside was a library overlooking the moat right below and a 'privy closet' which he might have used for his religious devotions. He also built a long gallery which stretched from the Lanthorn Tower to the Salt Tower in the southeastern section. As Henry and his family promenaded along this corridor, they could look out the windows which gave scenic views of the exterior gardens (the great garden to the north and the smaller private one to the south) on either side.

Elizabeth of York had her own associations with the Tower. As a little girl, she and her sisters were taken there by their mother, Elizabeth Woodville, when their father King Edward IV went to war. However, as the enemy marched towards the capital, the queen, fearful of her and her daughters' safety, had to abandon the Tower and seek sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. Even though Elizabeth he had seen to it that the castle was well fortified against any attack, she remembered how it was nonetheless breached during the Peasants' Revolt in the time of Richard II. Angry mobs stormed inside, terrified the king's mother, and dragged out their foes putting them to execution.

Even though the Tower held sad personal memories for Elizabeth of York - her uncle the Duke of Clarence was put to death while in prison drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine it was told, and her two brothers, King Edward V





and Richard of York, both mysteriously vanished inside after Richard III seized the throne - she still held court there as queen. While Elizabeth's stay in 1487 was merely to prepare for her own coronation that November, she was known to have been in the Tower in 1492 and in 1502 as well.

She was also there in the summer of 1497 but under less favourable circumstances. That June, rebels coming from Cornwall had staged a revolt and the queen took her children - Prince Henry (the future Henry VIII), Princess Margaret, and Princess Mary - to the castle for the protection. The uprising was suppressed, and later at the end of January 1503, Elizabeth was there once again. The Tower was meant to be a stopover on her way to Richmond Palace where the queen, heavily pregnant, was to deliver her baby. However, the child - a girl - came prematurely on 2 February. Sadly, Elizabeth succumbed to what was probably puerperal fever and died nine days later.

Following the death of Henry VII on 21 April 1509, his son and successor was recorded as leaving Richmond Palace for the Tower two days afterwards. There the younger Henry 'remained closely and secret with his Council, till the funerals of his father were finished and ended.' On the



Medal celebrating the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York

same day that Henry VIII took up residence, two very unpopular ministers from his father's reign, Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, were also in the Tower, but as prisoners.<sup>4</sup> These two would be the first in a long list of persons deemed as traitors and put to death by Henry VIII.

On 21 June, Henry went to the Tower again, this time to await his coronation. Keeping him company was his wife, Katherine of Aragon, who would receive her crown along with him. During their stay, the king, in keeping with tradition, created new Knights of the Bath - called such as the candidates had a ritual bathing before they were dubbed by the sovereign.

Unlike his parents, Henry VIII did not fancy the Tower; he much preferred the comforts of

Greenwich Palace, Whitehall, and Hampton Court. His only other visits to the Tower were in 1532 and 1533. On 5 December 1532, Henry met the French ambassador there and gave him a tour of the place and showed him 'all the treasure'. Four days later, the king did likewise for his mistress and queen-in-waiting Anne Boleyn.<sup>5</sup>

In 1533, Henry welcomed Anne, whom he had secretly married months before and was now pregnant with his child, to the Tower again. On 29 May, Henry stood by



the postern gateway (the Byward Tower) as she came by barge in a lavish water pageant held in her honour just before her coronation. Before a crowd assembled at the wharf, Henry greeted Anne with a kiss and he patted her stomach drawing everyone's attention to the baby within whom he was certain would be his longed for son.

The couple stayed for two days and Anne was pampered in the new lodgings provided for her. The royal palace complex stretching from the Lanthorn Tower to the Wardrobe Tower (now a ruin) adjoining the White Tower had been given an extensive overhaul under the direction of the king's minister Thomas Cromwell. Rooms were refurbished or rebuilt entirely for the

new queen's comfort. Other parts of the Tower were given attention to also. The Great Hall near the royal lodgings in the inmost ward was fixed up. It was here that Henry and Anne entertained their guests before her crowning. Saint Thomas's Tower (built above the so-called 'Traitors' Gate), the Broad Arrow Tower, and the Salt Tower were also repaired to house important officials attending the coronation. The White Tower also underwent renovation, particularly with the addition of onion shaped domes set above the four corner turrets. These can still be seen today.<sup>6</sup>

Three years after Anne Boleyn's triumph, the Tower of London was the scene of her downfall. On 2 May 1536, the queen was arrested at



Anne Boleyn's Last Farewell  
to Her Ladies (by M. L. Gow)





Katheryn Howard Brought to the Tower of London (by E. F. Skinner)

Greenwich and brought to imprisonment by water. At the Byward Tower, where she had formerly been received by the king, she dropped to her knees and in tears protested her innocence before breaking into peals of frenzied laughter. Anne's one comfort was that she would not be put in a dungeon as she had expected to be, but in the same lodgings where she had rested prior to her crowning. Ironically as well, the Great Hall in which she had banqueted was now a court room in which she would be judged and condemned for allegedly plotting the king's death and engaging in adultery. On 19 May, Anne met her end on a scaffold on Tower Green built near the north face of the White Tower.<sup>7</sup> After she was dispatched by a French swordsman, she was buried in the

little Chapel of Saint Peter Ad Vincula.

The downfall of Henry VIII's fifth wife, Katheryn Howard, was similar to that of her cousin Anne Boleyn. She too was accused of infidelity and sent to the Tower in February 1542. Still, Katheryn was gently treated and those taking her to prison 'paid her as much honour as when she was reigning.' Katheryn was placed in the royal palace as her cousin had been, and on 13 February, she was 'beheaded in the same spot where Anne Boleyn had been executed.'<sup>8</sup> Before her death, to make sure she conducted herself properly and with dignity, the young queen requested that the block be brought to her so she could practice laying her head upon it.

By the closing of Henry VIII's reign, the Tower of London was infamous as a place of imprisonment





and of execution (at the associated places of Tower Hill and Tyburn). One notorious example of the government's cruelty in dealing with supposed traitors was that of Anne Askew. An outspoken Protestant, Anne was arrested for heresy in 1546. The king's officials, Richard Rich and Thomas Wriothesley, were determined that she confess and when she refused, they put her to torture. Even though such methods had to be officially sanctioned, Anne - despite being a female and a gentlewoman in rank - was piteously and mercilessly racked. Rich and Wriothesley only stopped because Anne maintained her silence. When she was taken to her execution a month later - she was to be burnt at the stake - she had to be carried in a chair because of the suffering she had endured.

When Henry VIII's son Edward VI became king in 1547, it was recorded that he was welcomed to

the Tower at the Bulwark Gate, the principal entrance at the western side on 31 January. Days later, he was seen in the royal palace sitting under a Cloth of Estate receiving city officials. Edward even attended his first meeting of the esteemed Order of the Garter while in the Tower, and was noted as having his medal of Saint George 'about his neck and his garter about his leg.'<sup>9</sup>

Edward's premature death at age 15 on 6 July 1553 would bring about another tragedy - that of his equally young cousin Lady Jane Grey. Before he passed away, Edward appointed the like

minded Protestant Jane as his successor, instead of his Catholic half-sister Mary as Henry VIII's will dictated. On 10 July, Jane was brought to the Tower by barge with her husband Guildford Dudley in tow. As a relatively obscure claimant to the throne (Jane was a great-granddaughter of Henry VII), she





was not popular and many supported the right of Princess Mary instead. As expected, the people rose in support of her and by 19 July, Mary was proclaimed queen instead. Jane was ejected from the royal apartments and confined to the home of her jailer Nathaniel Partridge facing Tower Green (now the Gentleman Gaoler's House). Her husband Guildford and his brothers were locked in the Beauchamp Tower not far away. Inscriptions made by the Dudleys still survive on its walls - a heraldic memorial to themselves and a carving of Jane's name ascribed to Guildford.

Despite her predicament, Jane Grey was confident of an eventual pardon from her royal cousin. Until then, her detention was not harsh. Partridge treated Jane with kindness, and on occasions, she was allowed to 'walk in the queen's garden and on the hill.'<sup>10</sup> But fate would prove

unkind and dash Jane's hopes of freedom and of life. At the end of January 1554, a rebellion against the queen - though it failed - sealed her fate. Fearful that her crown would never be safe if rivals such as Jane were kept alive, Queen Mary reluctantly signed her death warrant, along with that of Guildford Dudley. Immediately after her husband was executed on Tower Hill on 12 February, Jane herself was led to a scaffold set up on the green.

When she was proclaimed queen, Mary Tudor and her entourage (which included Princess Elizabeth) took up residence in the Tower in August 1553. Jane Grey was still living then, but there is no account of the two cousins ever coming face-to-face. It was such a meeting that Elizabeth would desperately hope for when she found herself in trouble with her sister in March 1554. Mary had suspected her involvement in the

uprising against her and she ordered Elizabeth to be arrested and interrogated. Before she was taken, Elizabeth wrote to Mary begging to see her to plead her innocence, but to no avail. On Palm Sunday, she was rowed to the Tower and following in her mother's footsteps, disembarked at the wharf and brought into prison via the drawbridge at the Byward Tower.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to popular belief, Elizabeth was lodged in the royal apartments, not in the Bell Tower (with its leads to the Beauchamp Tower that later became associated with her as 'Queen Elizabeth's Walk'). As the palace complex was by the gardens, the princess was sometimes given permission to take exercise there and in the long gallery built by her grandfather Henry VII.<sup>12</sup>

To her relief, Elizabeth was finally released on 19 May, the anniversary of her mother's death. She laid low avoiding her sister's displeasure, and when Mary expired in November 1558,

Elizabeth was declared Queen of England. As her predecessors had done, Elizabeth took possession of the Tower of London at her crowning in January. On the day she was to set out to Westminster, she made a prayer before her subjects. Recalling her imprisonment, Elizabeth spoke of the Biblical Daniel, who like herself was delivered 'out of the den from the cruelty of the greedy and raging lions.' For this, she gave Heaven 'thanks, honour, and praise forever'.<sup>13</sup>

**ROLAND HUI**

## NOTES

1. Alison Weir, *Elizabeth of York: A Tudor Queen and Her World*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2013, p. 166.
2. Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life 1460 - 1547*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 34. See also Buck, George, *The History of the Life and Reigne of Richard the Third*, London: W. Wilson, 1647, p. 139.
3. Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle; Containing the History of England, During the Reign of Henry the Fourth and the Succeeding Monarchs*, London: printed for J. Johnson, 1809, p. 423.
4. *ibid.*, p. 505.
5. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII (L & P)*, V, no. 1633.
6. Anna Keay, *The Elizabethan Tower of London – The Haiward and Gascoyne Plan of 1597*, London: London Topographical Society, 2001, pp. 31, 36, 37, 41, 43, and 44.
7. In the 16th century, Tower Green was more extensive than what it is today. Also, the execution spot in front of Saint Peter's Chapel (now marked by a glass memorial) was a Victorian invention. Interestingly, the space before the church was once a graveyard. Four of the men condemned with Anne Boleyn were buried there.
8. *L & P*, XVII, no. 124.
9. Chris Skidmore, *Edward VI: The Lost King of England*, New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 56.
10. *The Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, (edited by John Gough Nichols), London: printed for the Camden Society, 1850, p. 33. The 'hill' was not Tower Hill outside the Tower of London, but the upslope open green surrounding the White Tower.
11. The well-known, if not all truthful story of Elizabeth at Traitors' Gate was later popularized by John Foxe.
12. Anna Keay, *The Elizabethan Tower of London*, p. 47 and p. 45.
13. Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, (edited by Henry Ellis), London: printed for E.C. & J. Rivington, 1811, pp. 719-720.



# SIX CATHOLIC MARTYRS

By Gareth Russell

The sixteenth century often claimed victims in its religious or political quarrels. While Catholics who died for their faith, like Thomas More or Edmund Campion, are now broadly famous, there were many others, particularly during peaks in persecution at various stages under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Six are chosen for this article to show how the water between politics and religion were often muddled, as well as serving as historical markers along the way for the ways in which the persecution of Catholics evolved.

For instance, if we look at the case of Elizabeth Barton, dubbed “the Holy Maid of Kent,” who was hanged at Tyburn in 1534, religious dissent is still being treated much as it was in the Middle Ages. Barton claimed to have received miraculous visions warning of dire punishments for Henry VIII if he married Anne Boleyn and set aside his first wife, Katherine of Aragon. There had been cases like this in the Middle Ages - King John, for instance, executed a sermonising hermit called Peter of Wakefield and, famously, the government of Henry VI had burned Joan of Arc. Prognostications against the Royal Family had always been treated seriously, in a devoutly religious era, and Barton’s death, aged only 28, should be seen in

that context. However, she also became the only woman whose decapitated head was displayed on a pike over London Bridge, a dubious distinction which perhaps indicates that the Tudor regime was beginning to regard the threat from traditionalists even more seriously in light of the Break with Rome.

Elizabeth Barton’s crime was seen as primarily religious in nature. Or, at least, that was how it was framed. The suggestion that she had fabricated her visions, or received them from evil sources, was heavily implied, along with sustained threats



SAINT MARGARET CLITHEROW

to discredit her. However, in Tudor society, religion and politics were almost never separated entirely. Robert Aske, reluctant leader of the great Catholic uprising, the Pilgrimage of Grace, in 1536, paid for those loyalties by being hoisted at York in chains to rot to death from exposure. His death was presented as political - the consequences of treason - much as Elizabeth Barton's had been for religion, yet, both showed that the two were already inextricably linked.

Three years later, the respected Catholic theologian, Dr. Richard Featherstone, was executed in the same spot as the Holy Maid, but with the far more painful death of being drawn and quartered after half-hanging. Five men - two fellow Catholics and three evangelicals - perished alongside him, as Henry VIII attempted to control the political threat he perceived from traditionalist Catholics, alongside his dwindling hold over the rising number of Protestant denominations. Featherstone had once been a chaplain to Katherine of Aragon and he had tutored Henry VIII's eldest daughter, with his execution thus showing that nobody was safe.

For the Tudor royals, Catholic and Protestant, obedience was crucial and Elizabeth I, who was a sincere but not fundamentalist Protestant, was personally uninterested in forcing Catholics to embrace her faith, a fact which makes it all the more ironic that so many of the worst cases of anti-Catholic persecution were enacted by her government. On 25th

March 1586, the Feast of the Annunciation, Margaret Clitherow was publicly pressed, or crushed, to death when she refused to admit where she had hidden Catholic priests. Ever since the Pope had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, many English Protestants characterised Catholics as "the enemy within". Clitherow, married to a butcher in York, suffered an agonising death for attempting to hide her spiritual leaders. Her own door was placed over her, rocks applied, trying to force information from her, but she died before she broke.

A year later, the perceived figurehead of this crisis was clumsily beheaded. Protestants claimed that Mary, former queen of Scots, had died because she plotted Queen Elizabeth's death; Mary, holding a crucifix and her rosary beads, insisted she was being slain for her Catholic faith. Dying with extraordinary bravery, the late queen was transformed into a Catholic heroine, with anti-English riots breaking out in Paris when news broke of her execution.

Elizabeth's two-decade delay in executing Mary Stuart indicated that she had hoped to find any other way out than execution and she showed that, again, with another Catholic cousin. Elizabeth's maternal grandmother had been a Howard and Elizabeth just wanted one sign of nominal religious obedience from her kinsman, Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, whom she reluctantly imprisoned in the Tower. When the





devoutly Catholic earl refused to attend Protestant church services, as the new anti-Catholic laws required, Elizabeth tried to broker a deal, by which she offered one - just one service - which the Earl should attend in public, after which the Queen would restore his liberty, his wealth, and receive him to court as her favourite. Philip could not do it, he felt, just as the Queen felt she could not totally exempt him from her laws. The issue was still rumbling as he sat a prisoner in the Tower when, on Sunday 19 October 1595, he caught a

winter fever, sickened, and died, aged 38.

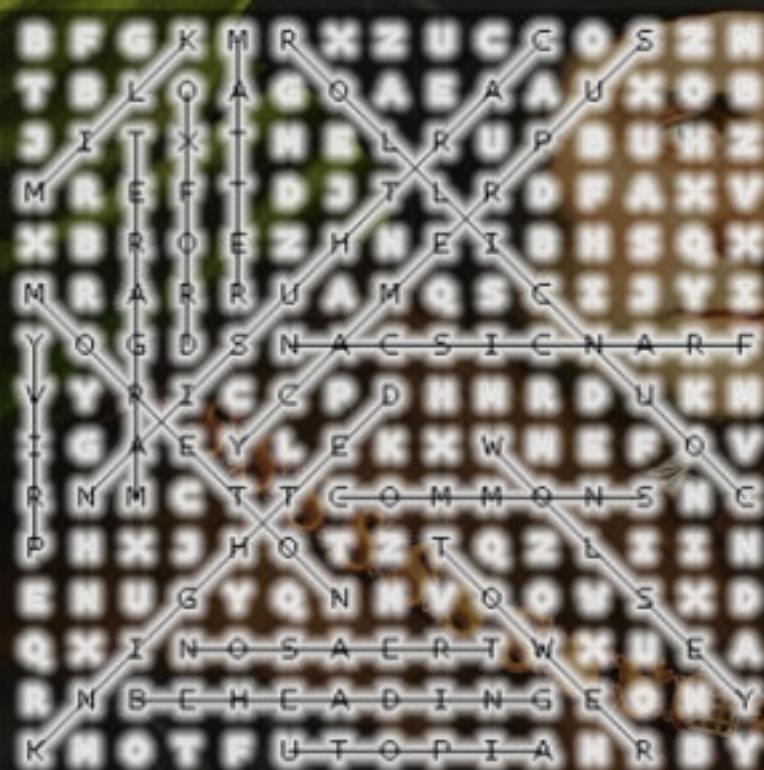
Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, like Margaret Clitherow, is now a Catholic saint; Richard Featherstone was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in the 19th century. Their bravery continues to inspire many today, as well as offering historians opportunities to explore the shifting reality of being a Catholic in Tudor England.

**GARETH RUSSELL**





# Thomas More Quiz ANSWERS



Beheading  
 Carthusian  
 Commons  
 Councillor  
 Franciscan  
 Knighted  
 Margaret  
 Matter  
 Milk  
 Moreton  
 Oxford  
 Privy  
 Supremacy  
 Tower  
 Treason  
 Utopia  
 Walsey



# Parish Church Music in Pre-Reformation Tudor England

It is difficult to comprehend today the sheer impact the Reformation must have had upon the daily lives of ordinary Tudor citizens. It is not an understatement to say that their whole world must have been turned upside down by the change to hundreds of years of religious practice which had been part and parcel of everyone's existence. So often, when talking about the Reformation and Henry's break with Rome, the focus is placed on the political ramifications, the dissolution of the monasteries and the wider implications of the establishment of the Church of England. Equally, when looking at looking at sacred and religious music, the focus is often on the noble and courtly households and cathedrals.

By Jane Moulder

The early 16th century saw the burgeoning of the art of polyphony, luscious multi-part harmony, as exemplified in the Eton Choirbook, which would have necessitated highly trained choral singers to be able to perform it. But little time is given to focusing on how some of the everyday practices of religious life would have changed for everyday churchgoers and



A modern copy of the 'Wingfield' organ. Based on a surviving keyboard, it is thought that the instrument would have been built for the local church c1530. Back and front view. Goetze & Gwynn

parish clergy and consequently, the music associated with the old Catholic rites compared with the newer protestant ways of worship. How was music heard and performed in the local parish church and could it ever match the glorious polyphonic voices that were part and parcel of cathedral life?

Music has accompanied religious

texts since the earliest days of the church with psalms and responses being sung or chanted from the 9th century onwards. This was known as 'plainchant', which means words sung to a single, unaccompanied line without instrumental accompaniment. In the early Catholic church, masses were traditionally sung, in Latin, rather than

spoken in English. Consequently, in a small parish church, the services would have been performed by the local priest with no congregational participation or even any understanding of the words and texts being intoned. However, from the early 14th century onwards, things had begun to change and the introduction of polyphony (more than one line of harmony), once seen as sacrilege of the religious texts because the words could not be heard clearly, became more and more established within the church. If there was participation by the congregation in services, then it would have been minimal, perhaps a hymn sung occasionally but no more.

Although being able to sing and read music was obviously not a principal role of a priest, it has been ascertained that some rectors had studied music form-







ally and obtained degrees in the subject. At this period, this would have meant that they would have been composing music as well. In fact, it is clear that sometimes being a chorister was the first step on the clerical career ladder.

In wills and inventories, some rectors also owned 'pricksong' or music books and one Walter Smythe, rector of St Alban's in Lon-

don, bequeathed a number of books to Eton College when he died in 1525 and Thomas Roger, parson of the small village of Stowting in Kent, left a book of polyphonic masses to Wye College.

But what music was performed in church, by whom and how often? Surprisingly, one of the largest influences on the development of music in the parish church in the hun-

dred years or so leading up to the Reformation was the concept and doctrine of purgatory.

Throughout the medieval and Tudor periods, there was a strong sense of community cohesion and the parishioners would all have participated in church affairs and worked hard for the benefit of the parish as a whole. The wealthier individuals especially so and they

would have invested considerable sums of money in their parish and their local church. It is clear that from the mid 15th century onwards, there was a huge expanse in church building and internal decoration and adornments and some beautiful parish churches were produced as a result. This investment was based largely on the Catholic church's teachings on Purgatory, something that was to be dismissed by the later protestants.

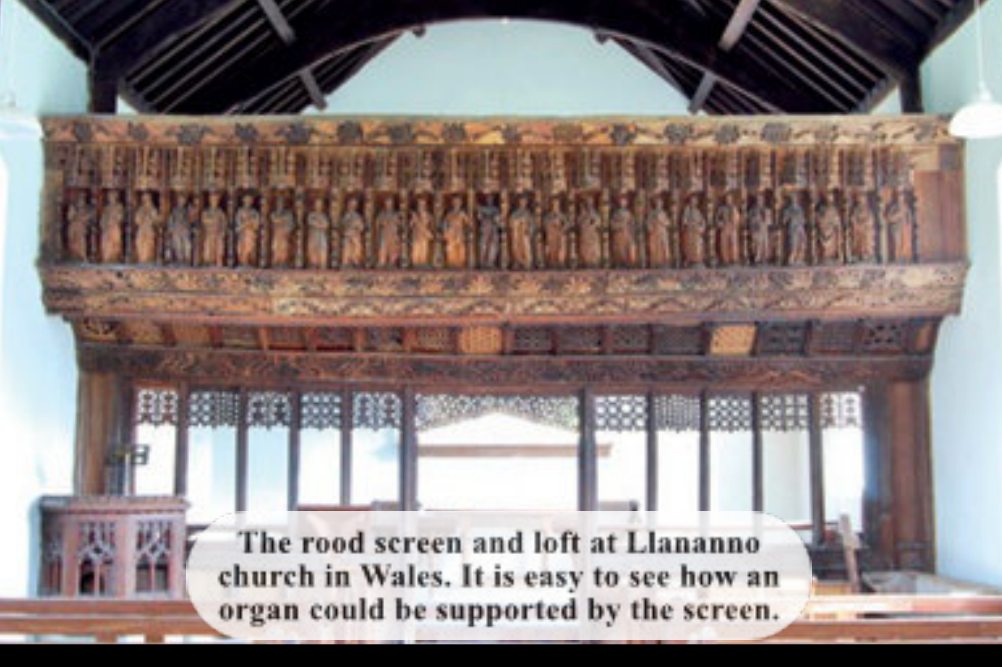
The basic tenets of the catholic church prescribed that in order to be saved from purgatory (the place where souls would go to expiate their sins before going to heaven) one had to believe in the Gospel, attend church and participate in the sacraments, attend Eucharist services and also be penitent by attending confession or by carrying out other acts to show humiliation and the remission of sins. The church encouraged people to expedite their progress through Pur-

gatory by demonstrating good works, such as giving to charity and the poor or by contribution to church building, thus benefiting the soul. The church did not hold back in leaving the wealthy in no doubt that their sins would be rapidly forgiven and their passage through purgatory all the shorter if they invested in giving substantial sums of money to charity for supporting the poor, the clergy or in furnishing or beautifying churches.

Tudor Choirboys.







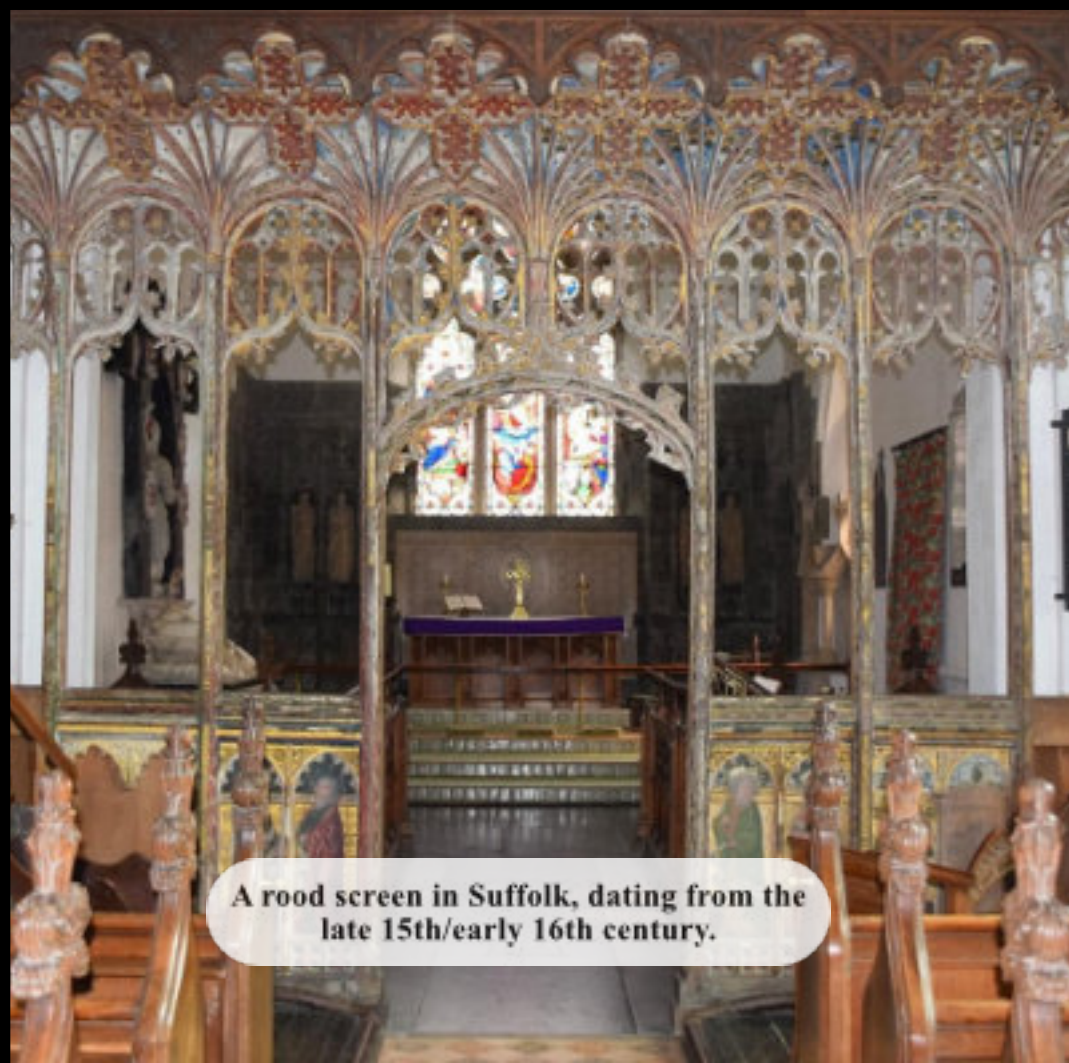
The rood screen and loft at Llananno church in Wales. It is easy to see how an organ could be supported by the screen.

could be sung for the souls of the dead with the aim of quickening the journey through purgatory. A large number of English parish churches, even smaller ones, were also able to afford organs and chantry chapels as they were bestowed upon them by wealthy members of the congregation. St Paul's in London had more than 20 separate chantry chapels, each with their own singers and clerks.

It wasn't only the very wealthy that paid for memorials and masses, a well-to-do trader or merchant would also leave money, not only for their funeral with musical accompaniment, but also for a chantry priest or clerk to sing in his memory in perpetuity. It is estimated that more money was given to the church in the hundred years before the Reformation than at any other time before or after.

This huge influx of wealth into the church had an impact on music due to the growth of the building of

chantries. These were side chapels to the main part of the building, the cost of which could be covered by a single, wealthy benefactor. The purpose of the chantry was so that masses and songs



A rood screen in Suffolk, dating from the late 15th/early 16th century.

In many churches, new and highly decorated and ornately carved rood screens were erected thanks to the benefactors. This proliferation of the building of rood-screens and lofts, which was placed on the boundary between the nave and the chancel of the church, took place in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. These structures enabled the building of a 'great organ' above it. Another smaller freestanding organ, such as a portative organ, could also be placed in a side or chantry chapel. Astonishingly, seventy-eight of London's ninety-six parish churches had built two or more organs by the 1540s. Organs were popular instruments of the period and there were a number of different models and types, including regals. Regals were reed organs and King Henry VIII had a number in his collection. They were small and portable

and became very popular during the early to mid-16th century.

As well as investing in the infrastructure and decoration of the buildings, the increased wealth enabled churches to employ, amongst others, chantry priests and singing men. Chantry priests were employed specifically for the purpose of singing masses and sacred texts. People would pay the chantry priest for the masses to be sung for the souls of the recently departed or in memory of a family member, yet adding more income of the parish church. These chantry priests would then also add to the general voices in the church, thus enriching the musical experience for the congregation. The gifted funds also supported the building of organs, teaching of young choristers and children and, overall, add to the wealth of the parish. Some

churches were even able to afford to employ a full choir, something that would have been out of the reach of a parish church before this practice.

Some churches were even able to employ more than one chantry priest, thus enabling the use of polyphony, once the reserve of cathedrals, to be heard in a local parish church. For example, the village of Cotterstock in Northamptonshire, the foundation was able to provide two clerks who had competent skills in reading and singing and "matins, vespers and other hours were to be solemnly sung in choir daily, with mass of the day and mass of our Lady at the high altar, and this distinctly and audibly with good psalmody and suitable pauses in the middle of each verse of the psalms." In Doncaster, due to the presence of chantry priests there was "daily matins, mass





Choristers, choirboys and musicians performing in church, *Practica Musica*, 1566.

and evensong [singing] by note". The singing was from 'pricksong' or notation and part-books were used for orchestrated polyphony, rather than singing an improvised, harmonic line – or faburden.

As the 15th century drew to a close, vestries were becoming more willing to pay for music out of the parish rates and many church ac-

counts show payments for music. By around 1500 the richer churches were beginning to acquire staff or full-time musicians, who were known as 'clerks' or 'conducts'. It was at this time that for many churches the chancel was extended and choir stalls constructed to accommodate the choir boys that the parishes could now afford. Even if a parish

could not stretch to training and retaining their own singers, the hiring in of choirboys from cathedrals or other foundations on special occasions became the practice.

In studying various church records, it is clear that the church quickly embraced the fashion for sung masses and that where possible, as well as the very popular Lady Mass

being sung, the other principal services were also sung, especially Matins and Vespers (Evensong) and where performed, Lauds and Compline.

Chantry priests played a significant role in the parish because, as well as singing for the souls of the dead, they took an active part in the community, often acting as teachers to young boys and training choristers. They were often trained musicians who could also play the organ and could read and write music and it is clear that they also sung for the normal church services as well. Their voices could well be augmented by the parish clerk. Often a layman from the village, their role was multi faceted, such as collecting tithes, sweeping the church and looking after the vestments but they were also clearly recruited for their musical abilities. It seems that many were recruited specifically because

they were singers and musicians and one at Rolvenden in Kent, was also the local organ builder. In London, the parish clerks had their own guild, thus giving them civic privileges and duties. As well as singing, they also staged religious pageants and plays and they trained and provided boys and actors to perform in them.

The increase of wealth into the church from benefactors helped establish choral schools in larger parishes. There is evidence that from the late 15th century onwards, boys were taught to sing liturgical polyphony with some being simply 'chantrists' and others also receiving a 'grammar' education. In Saffron Walden in 1520, a parish clerk, William Dawson, was employed as he was 'an able syngingman' as well as 'a sufficient gramaryon' and he went on to teach boys to sing and also grammar.

By the early 16th century, instrumentalists as well as singers began to be employed and some churches commenced the hiring in of waits (town or civic musicians) or freelance minstrels to add some musical accompaniment to the service. However, it is unlikely that the church owned any instruments other than an organ so the musicians would have used their own. Sadly, no musical manuscript specifically associated with English parish church has survived from this period.

However, as the 16th century progressed, the doctrine of purgatory became to be increasingly under attack. In 1536, the Ten Articles was published. This was an Act of Parliament, complete with an introduction by Henry VIII, which set out the official position of the Church of England. Here, for the first time, doubt





A modern reconstruction based on the parish church organ from Debenham in Suffolk and dating to 1525. (Goetze & Gwynn)

was cast on the necessity for the intercession for the souls of the dead. In 1545 the Chantry Act began to see the dissolution of some of the practices but a later act in 1547, saw the decisive suppression of

chantries, chantry colleges, guilds and related institutions. Only the colleges of Oxford, Cambridge, Eton, Winchester, Windsor and Newton were exempt.

This sadly brought an abrupt end to the careers of many pro-

fessional musicians and caused the disbanding of many parish choirs. It also meant that during Edward VI's reign that the majority of organs in churches were dismantled or sold. Not because organs were banned but simply because they could no longer be maintained. Also, the rood screens which supported some of them were taken down in order to make a more inclusive church. It is often said that it was the Commonwealth that destroyed many of England's great organs but the damage had already been done 100 years earlier. An anonymous Jacobean writer complained that 'many of them were employed to make pewter dishes'. Music and singing did continue to be performed but the services were changing and so was the wealth of the church. Without the influx of money from those paying for masses to be sung in their

memory or paying for the maintenance of singers and clerks, the sound of the music changed. Clerks no longer received the necessary income and had to find alternative employment and some of the smaller, poorer parishes lost their musical contingent completely.

The old ways were lamented by many and this is summed up by Thomas Whythorne. In his autobiography (1576) he reflected on this “Now I will speak of the use of music in this time present. First, for the church, you do and shall see it so slenderly maintained in the cathedral churches and colleges and parish

churches, that when the old store of musicians be worn out, the which were bred when the music of the church was maintained (which is likely to be in short time), ye shall have few or none remaining, except it be a few singing-men and players on musical instruments. Of the which you will find a very few or non that can make a good lesson of descant”.

A parishioner, in 1562, wrote sadly “what shall wee now doe at Church since wee cannot heare the like piping, singing, chaunting, and playing upon the organes that we could before?”

The music in pre-Reformation parish churches would not

have been the high-art compositions as performed by the Chapel Royal and heard in the major cathedrals and courts, but it is clear that rich, polyphonic music would have been heard by many congregations throughout Tudor England. The music was clearly complex and should not be considered a poor alternative. Whilst sung in Latin and not as participatory in nature as the later reformed church, the music heard each week in the local parish church would have undoubtedly enriched the religious and spiritual experiences of the congregations that attended them.

**JANE MOULDER**

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PARVULE PATRISSA, PATRIÆ VIRTVTIS ET HÆRES  
ESTO, NIHIL MAIUS MAXIMVS ORBIS HABET.  
GNATVM VIX POSSVNT COELVM ET NATVRA DEDISSE,  
HVIVS QVEM PATRIS, VICTVS HONORET HONOS.  
ÆQVATO TANTVM, TANTI TV FACTA PARENTIS,  
VOTA HOMINVM, VIX QVO PROGREDIANTVR, HABENT  
VINCITO, VICISTI, QVOT REGES PRISCVS ADORAT  
ORBIS, NEC TE QVI VINCERE POSSIT, ERIT.

*Karel van Mander*

EDWARD VI AS A CHILD 1537

# The Tudor New Year Gifts

by **Elizabeth Jane Timms**

In the Tudor period, gifts were formally exchanged not on Christmas Eve but instead, on New Year's Day. The tradition of presents being given and received on Christmas Eve properly began with George III's consort, Queen Charlotte who introduced the Christmas tree to Britain from her native Germany. Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha did much to popularise the Christmas tree in British cultural tradition and the custom of the Christmas Eve 'Bescherung' was firmly adopted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in their family. It had however, been kept by the Queen as Princess Victoria and her children continued to mark the New Year with charming artwork and compositions. The tradition of the New Year's Day gifts, predated even the Tudor age and can in fact, be traced back much earlier, even as far as the thirteenth century. (1)

**T**HE NEW YEAR'S DAY GIFTS were given first to the King, who would receive them from the Queen and other members of the Royal Family as well as from his courtiers, nobles, clergy, servants and finally, the laity who had no connection whatsoever to the court. These gifts provided the chance for the giver or representative to personally present their offering to the monarch in a special ceremony held on New Year's Day morning in the King's Presence Chamber; the presentation of gifts organised by order of the donor's rank downwards. (2) A King's New Year gifts from his subjects could typically include items of plate, money and jewellery, but also precious, luxury objects such as embroidery, portraits or books. (3) The matter of providing a gift that had to literally be 'fit for a king' meant that the donors could often be competitive in their choices, in the ultimate hope of winning royal favour: Cardinal Wolsey's frequent gift to Henry VIII was a gold cup worth one hundred Tudor pounds; he received for example,

for New Year 1528, 40 ¼ oz worth of precious plate in return. (4)

The King's presents were painstakingly itemised by the Treasurer of the Household; examples of these so-called 'gift rolls' survive in the National Archives, Kew. (5) The New Year gifts would usually have been displayed to the court on trestle tables (6) and once individually documented, put away.

The monarch's gifts could be offered by those seeking royal patronage or by those who simply wanted to make an offering to their existing patron. The monarch was presented with the New Year gifts first and it is possible that festive inspiration may have been taken from the offering of gifts to the Christ Child by the Magi, who were of course, kings themselves: gold was among those gifts offered at the Adoration. Perhaps it is no accident that the Queen's Offering at the Feast of



the Epiphany was in fact, those same royal gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (7)

Most poignantly of course, Henry VIII had received on 1 January 1511, that most sacred gift of all kingship: a son and heir, born to him by Queen Catherine – the supreme 1511 New Year's Day gift from his wife. According to information in the Royal Collection, the artist Hans Holbein the Younger gave Henry VIII the toddler portrait of Prince Edward in a red plumed hat, as his New Year gift for 1539. (8) This toddler portrait is listed as 'Edward VI as a Child, probably 1538', in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, Washington. The belief that this could indeed be Holbein the Younger's New Year gift of 1539 to Henry VIII is repeated in the official listing of the portrait in the collections at the National Gallery of Art. When researching the portrait's provenance history, the present author found that its first entry did indeed seem relate to a gift from the artist; more specifically, it probably refers to that entry in the New Year's Gift Roll for the first day of January in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington; the regnal year properly dates it to 1539, as a picture of the Prince's Grace. (9)

In turn, the monarch would make gifts to his courtiers and the members of the Royal Household and, just as the gifts received had been by order of the person's rank, so these were weighted by order of their recipient's importance. (10) On New Year's afternoon, the donors could arrive at the Jewel House to receive from the monarch; their gifts typically included plate and sometimes, an additional present of money. (11) Three centuries later and an elderly Queen Victoria could still be seen distributing Christmas gifts to the members of her Household at Osborne House in the late 1890s.

If a gift had to be fitting for a king,

then in the order of precedence, it had of course, to be fit for a queen also. We might recall Princess Elizabeth's fine gift to her stepmother, Queen Catherine Parr which is a treasure of the Bodleian Libraries. Hand-embroidered (most probably professionally), it is an exquisite example of the fact that books could be exchanged as costly presents on New Year's Day. Entitled *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, this was the eleven-year-old Princess Elizabeth's New Year gift to Queen Catherine. According to the Bodleian Libraries, it was given to Queen Catherine on 31 December 1544. (12) Princess Elizabeth's own English translation of this French poem was made out in her own hand. We would probably be correct in assuming that this choice may well have appealed to her stepmother, that same Queen Catherine Parr who would later make her own prayer book, *The Lamentation, or Complaint of a Sinner*, published in 1547: the same year of Henry VIII's demise, but crucially, not within his lifetime. The twelve-year-old Elizabeth's gorgeous New Year gift for her father the following year was her translation of Queen Catherine Parr's *Prayers and Meditations* into Latin, French and Italian in her own handwriting. This small red book is bound in cloth of gold and is beautifully embroidered with the King's initials on the front and on the back, the royal cypher of 'H' and 'K' for her father and stepmother; this present was faultlessly executed and contains no single mistake. (13)

In the case of Henry's six queens, New Year gifts sometimes featured in the background of more important events. As her New Year gift for 1528, Anne Boleyn had given Henry VIII a splendid diamond and that precious jewel: a 'ship' in which a lonely maiden was being tossed; this gift resulted in Henry's

reply: a promise to actually surpass her in his measure of love and devotion. (14) Similarly, when Henry arrived to 'nourish love' by surprising Anne of Cleves at that fateful meeting at Rochester, he rode from Greenwich bringing his New Year's Day gift for Anne – referred to as a 'token' - which he presented to her in the guise of a messenger, before throwing off his disguise. According to Chapuys, the Lady Anne of Cleves later sent the King as her New Year gifts for 1541, 'two large horses with violet velvet trappings'. (15) Henry's festive gifts to Katherine Howard for the period between Christmas 1540 and New Year 1541 included a sable muffler and magnificent 'square' jewellery, numbering no less than thirty-three diamonds and sixty rubies. (16)

The present author checked the foreign and domestic Letters and Papers for any mention of the New Year gifts. New Year's Day payments are indeed recorded and various sums are given out as rewards. The earliest record is contained within the King's Book of Payments for 1509; such listings are to be found at the commencement of a New Year under the annual expenses of the King's Household, made out by the Treasurer of the Chamber. In November 1509, the first payment of 333l. 6s. 8 d was recorded to the 'goldsmiths of London', in 'advancement of the King's New Year's gifts'; the royal heralds were regularly given the sum of 6l as largesse on New Year's Day. (17) The King's Book of Payments for 1510 show that the King's trumpets had 100 shillings, the Marshals of the Hall the sum of 6l. 13s. 4 d and 'the watch upon New Year's night' 40 shillings, with the same for the Queen's minstrels; a large payment of 484l. 10s. 8½d. was made out to Thomas Exmewe,

Nicholas Worley, Robert Amadis,  
William Kebill, John Monday,

Twiselton and John Van Utrike, goldsmiths of London, for jewels and item of plate 'against New Year's Day'. (18)

In January 1511, there is a payment for the New Year gifts, together with a reward for the fetching of a falcon. *This first day of January was of course, the occasion of the birth of Prince Henry Tudor - the short-lived baby of New Year's Day 1511 - and we find shortly afterwards a payment of 20l largess to the royal heralds at the christening of 'my Lord Prince Henry',* the gentlemen of the King's Chapel had a reward of 13l. 6s. 8d.; and 'for praying for the Queen's good deliverance', the sum of 6l. 13s. 4d. (19) In 1512, the court was at Greenwich and an entry is recorded for Henry Pole of some 40 shillings 'for bringing my Lady his mother's New Year's gift', whilst the goldsmiths were paid 775l. 0s. 3½d 'for the King's New Year's gifts'. (20) The goldsmiths were paid 118l. 18s. 10d *for the jewels and plate for the King's gifts in January 1513 and perhaps showing that books were also exchanged at this time, we find a payment of 15s. 8 d. to one John Porth, for '3 new great books of paper royal, of the largest assise, bought by him for the King's rich jewels and plate'.* (21) The King's Payments for 1523 show that the goldsmith William Holland was paid 200 pounds 'in advance...for making the King's New Year gifts'. (22)

A typical example of how New Year was recorded in the accounts can be seen for the year 1519. The King's Book of Payments records the King's offering for New Year – 6s. 8 d - and then lists various rewards distributed to members of the Household, including the porters, pages of the Chamber, shakbutts, henchmen, minstrels of the Queen's Chamber and 'drumslads', then 20 shillings to the Lord of Misrule, 20 shillings to a scholar at Oxford, 20 shillings to a woman for



arrowheads and finally, a reward of 6 shillings, 8 d. 'to the King's nurse, for cheese'. (23) The Treasurer of the Chamber accounts relate touching details in rewards given at New Year when the King was at Greenwich, including a payment to a person who gave the King 'sweet oranges' and another that gave the King a singing nightingale. Protocol decreed that items of plate were weighted at the Tower as we have seen, so it is only natural that we also find a January payment to Robert Draper and John Alalye from the Jewel House, for 'conveying plate late belonging to the lord Cardinal [Wolsey] from York Place to the Tower of London'. (24) Anne Boleyn is also mentioned in the privy payments of December 1530, with one hundred pounds paid 'to my lady Anne, towards her New Year's gifts'. (25)

For New Year 1540, the gifts given to little Prince Edward were a pair of flagons from the King, weighing 178 ounces, with a pair of salts covered of gilt, weighing some 38  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounces. The toddler prince also received a gold brooch containing a picture of St John the Baptist, set with a ruby from the Lady Mary and from the Lady Elizabeth, a present of her own needlework; the Abbot of Waltham gave the Prince Edward 'two oxen and ten multons'. (26)

The stream of New Year's gifts of course continued and they are recorded towards

the very end of the reign. As usual, gifts were exchanged in the Royal Family for New Year 1546 and we know this specifically, because these are mentioned in Prince Edward's own letters. The Prince thanked Queen Catherine Parr for her New Year's gift to him: her own and the King's portraits together. Queen Catherine Parr replied in a letter, that she was 'gratified by his appreciation of her little new-year's gift'. Edward wrote to the Lady Mary, in 'thanks for a new-year's gift which he is bound to prize both for its own worth and for the love of the giver'. Edward's first letter said it all, however. In a letter to his father, the young prince wrote: 'Thanks for a new-year's gift. Will strive to follow his father's example in virtue, wisdom and piety.' (27)

It was a fitting sentence, for it did in fact, exactly recall that original Latin inscription in the toddler portrait of him in about 1538, now thought to be that given by Hans Holbein the Younger to the King in 1539 as a New Year's gift, no less. The inscription by the poet Richard Morison (28) was written in praise of Henry VIII and began by urging the Prince in the following words: 'Parvvle Patrissa, Patriae Virtvtis et haeres...': to strive after the example of his father and be his heir in virtue.

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# Member Spotlight

## TUDOR ROYALTY EXPERIENCE

by Ceri Creffield

Having been obsessed with the Tudors since the age of around fourteen, I have always wondered what it would be like to dress in Tudor costume. How would I look? How would it feel? What would it be like to sit, stand and walk in a gown and kirtle?

I finally got my chance to find out (not before time!) in September 2021 when I spent a day at Thornbury Castle swanning around in authentic Tudor dress. This indulgence was my sixtieth birthday present to myself, and I am only sorry I never got to do it when I was younger, slimmer, and more attractive!

The day began at 10.00am with a Prosecco and chocolates reception. The weather was sunny and bright as I entered the castle courtyard, promising fine perambulations about the grounds later on. Samantha, who organises the events and makes all the gowns, was awaiting us would-be Tudors in the banqueting hall of the castle, along with her two ladies in waiting, all in period dress. The ladies in waiting instantly made themselves busy offering us drinks and chocolates. They were to spend the day helping us to dress, sit and stand and providing us with refreshment – in short dancing attendance on us as if we were truly Tudor nobility. With a frisson of anticipation, I noticed that in the large, elegant bay window at the end of the hall stood a number of mannequins adorned in sumptuous Tudor finery, from glowing

purple to soft pink to stunning gold and royal blue, all suffused in the gentle morning light from the window. The party consisted of myself, a much younger lady and a couple with two young daughters who were celebrating the mother's fortieth birthday. There should have been a seventh participant but unfortunately someone had had to cancel.

Samantha began by demonstrating what was in store for us by robing the younger lady in what she called "the phoenix dress", an absolutely gorgeous ensemble of flame and orange in the French style. This is what most of us think of as authentically Tudor – the wide skirts with a train, the low square neckline, and the turned-back sleeves. Having modestly donned a linen shift in private, our model stood waiting to be clothed. The next step was the farthingale – a petticoat with a hoop. Samantha explained that Catherine of Aragon had brought the farthingale to England and that prior to that, ladies had relied on the bulk of their petticoats to bear out their skirts. A lady of the Tudor period would have worn many layers of petticoats over the farthingale but as a concession to the warmth of the day and to our comfort, the farthingale was the only petticoat we had to wear on this occasion. We do, after all, have a warmer climate today than in the 16th century.

Over the petticoat went a bum roll - a linen pad to be tied around the waist and



# Member Spotlight

worn at the rear to bear the skirts out behind.

Next came the kirtle with its stiff bodice, which was laced on both sides. Along the neckline of the kirtle were many glistening jewels; these would be visible above the neckline of the gown itself and the hem of the shift would show above that.

After the kirtle, came the gown, cut low to reveal the jewels on the kirtle and put on like a coat and laced this time at the front. The lacing was covered by a stiff stomacher, a robust curved panel which once would have been pinned on with straight pins. Samantha's one concession to modernity in the costumes is the use of Velcro to fix the stomacher - less time-consuming and rather safer!

The sleeves of the gown came to just below the elbow, terminating in voluminous fur turn-backs. The lower sleeves had to be fitted separately and tied on underneath. The beauty of having everything in distinct parts like this was that kirtles, gowns and sleeves could be mixed and matched creating many different outfits.

Jewellery followed and lastly, came the matching French hood.

The result was simply stunning. The ensemble was outstanding and suited our model perfectly. The colours were spot on for her. She looked every inch a true Tudor lady.

Now that we knew what to expect, it was the turn of the rest of us to be robed.















# Member Spotlight

• occasionally gable hoods. Although I  
• much prefer the elegance of French  
• hoods, I did wonder how it felt to put on  
• a heavier gable headdress, although I  
• suspect that I would not want to wear one  
• all day! I would imagine it as something  
• akin to balancing a book on one's head in  
• the days of finishing schools, encouraging  
• the wearer to keep the head high. As it  
• was, I had parted my hair in the middle –  
• something I would never normally do –  
• for the sake of authenticity, and as my  
• long hair was securely tucked into the  
• sleeve of black material at the back of the  
• hood, I hoped I had some sense of what it  
• was like to have one's head always covered  
• in company.

• Only once this was in place, was I  
• allowed to view myself in a mirror. What

a revelation! There was something startling and surreal about seeing my own face look back at me from this opulent Tudor costume. I was so excited and delighted to see myself in period dress that I barely stopped grinning for the rest of the day.

After we were all dressed and had all posed many times for the photographer, we set off in stately procession around the grounds of the castle. Although it was September, the gardens still had the air of late summer about them and there were old-fashioned roses and herbs and bees to give the illusion of a more ancient time. I must admit to lingering behind a few times to watch the way in which the gowns swayed and rippled from behind as my companions walked along. There was







something beguilingly graceful about the movement. There were plenty more opportunities for photographs on the way, both formal poses and a few snaps I took myself. One highlight was climbing to pose on the mounting block in the courtyard which would have been used by Anne Boleyn during her stay, although her riding clothes would have been better adapted to climbing steps than our voluminous gowns.

One thing I realised early on was it is not a good idea to take a step back in a French gown. Most likely you will tread on your own train and find yourself pinioned to the ground, stumbling clumsily to regain your equilibrium. Similarly, it is not possible to slip past someone unobtrusively. To pass someone without impeding each other demands a wide berth. I was reminded of Catherine Parr and the Duchess of Somerset getting stuck in a doorway when each tried to claim precedence; it would have been all

too easy for that to happen! Sitting down has to be done mindfully, with a straight back, an awareness of where the seat is, where your skirts are and most importantly, where your centre of gravity is. To take a seat at table, it is essential to have someone to tuck your chair in behind you. Suddenly that ancient courtesy made perfect sense! However, once you are seated, you are free to assume the most comfortable position without fear of being indecorous. Just take a look at any Tudor illustration of seated women and you will see that there was no necessity to keep the knees together!

Of course, one of the most striking aspect of Tudor female portraiture is the habitual pose where the hands are clasped in front of the body or else hold an object before them. I did not need to spend long in the heavy fur turned-back sleeves to realise that this was the most comfortable position in which to hold them. I tested







# Member Spotlight

out the level of movement I had and found that I could raise my arms above my head but not for long. Later that afternoon, when the falconer was explaining something in great detail while his bird was perched on my gloved hand, I felt my arm grow heavier and heavier – and not from the weight of the falcon! It was a relief when I was finally able to lower it.

Wearing a French gown, then, was not compatible with any serious activity. As Samantha explained, we were wearing court gowns, designed to display wealth and rank, the conspicuous consumption of the 16th century with the yards and yards of material, fur, jewels and the richest materials. At court, a lady would typically only have worn this for four to

six hours a day. At home or in private, something less elaborate and more comfortable would be more appropriate. I could fully appreciate why Samantha herself was wearing an English gown with its fitted bodice and sleeves and narrower skirt. Although the fabric was no less magnificent, it was a far more practical choice for looking after a cohort of butterflies like us, weighed down by our own splendour.

After our wanderings, a hearty Sunday lunch was served with more prosecco and mead back in the banqueting hall. I am glad to say that knives and forks were employed. I don't think I would have dared to eat the meal Tudor style with just a knife and my fingers – not in all that gorgeous satin!







# Member

• Feeling replete, we were then entertained on the lawns by “Robert Cheeseman”, the King’s Falconer and his beautiful birds, which we all had a chance to hold.

• By now, we were attracting the attention of a great many people in and around the castle and we soon found ourselves invited to pose for official wedding photographs with the bride and groom whose reception was taking place in the castle. Many of the other guests also approached, asking to pose with us. We felt like celebrities!

• After a cream tea (as if lunch had not been enough!) we were free to try our hand at croquet or at archery. Again our ample skirts and sleeves made the croquet very difficult and since no one had any idea of the rules, our attempts descended into anarchy. It may have been no coincidence that the best archers among us seemed to be the two young girls, who lacked the turned-back sleeves in their costumes!

• By now, we had been in our sumptuous robes for around six hours. I assume a real Tudor lady would have maintained a flawless posture but I was by this time forgetting to stand tall, resulting in a rather crumpled look. Much as I had enjoyed the experience, it felt like time to change out of my gown and back into my top and jeggings. Such unstructured clothing now felt both liberating and unsupported. It felt like something was missing! It was with a pang that I handed back my gown, kirtle, hood and jewels. How I would have loved to keep them all!

• The whole day was an amazing experience and I felt it had given me a lot of insight into what a lady’s life at the



Tudor court would have been like. So much dressing and undressing! So much flaunting of one’s wealth. So much of one’s deportment and behaviour conditioned by one’s clothing. And all of this finery sewn by hand! As someone who can barely sew on a button, I am quite in awe of the work that goes into these outfits, even now with modern sewing machines. Perhaps it is just as well that I was born into the twentieth century and not the sixteenth and that I was only playing at being a Tudor. It was great fun, though, and I would do it again in an instant.

The Facebook page and website for the experience are: The Tudor Royalty Experience & Tudor Queens Wardrobe, and [www.tudorroyaltyexperience.co.uk](http://www.tudorroyaltyexperience.co.uk).

**CERI CREFFIELD**







# A Taste of Sandwich

Back in October 2021, we attended a medieval book-binding class at Sandwich Medieval Centre in East Kent. I was only there to observe really, though I paid for the class, because stitching is beyond me nowadays. I learned a lot – enough to make any references to book-binding sound more authentic in my Seb Foxley novels. Alex Summers, who ran the class in full medieval scribe's costume, used my materials for demonstration purposes, so he constructed my book for me. We know Alex and his wife Pam quite well from various re-enactments we've both attended. Pam has taught me so much about medieval pigments and the application of gold leaf in the past, much of which has crept into various articles and novels. I know the theories, even if the wonders of illuminated manuscripts are not possible for me any longer.

Alex showed us how to fold four sheets of paper at a time into quarters – 'quartos' – then crease and slit them to make a 'gathering' of A5 pages. Then we had to mark them up for stitching and I hope you can see the stitches in the photo above right. Each gathering [we made five] is sewn in separately to the soft leather cover which has a flap to fold over and protect the edges of the pages. There is also a thicker paper to reinforce the cover. Alex called this type of binding a Suffolk binding because

the few that have survived to the present come from that county. These



Book-binding



## TONI MOUNT

were used as scholars' notebooks from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century – Isaac Newton used similar books but without the protective flap in the 1660s at Cambridge – so they weren't meant to last but were passed around, re-used, until they fell apart. Hence, there aren't many survivors.

We were also shown how to measure up the pages into the correct proportions for a central gutter and margins, if we were going to produce a proper manuscript instead of just one for rough notes. Pages would be ruled up to keep the written lines straight but this would be done and the text and any illustrations completed before the pages were stitched together. This makes things complicated and if you've ever tried to print out a simple A5 booklet on your printer at home you'll be aware of the difficulties of getting the pages in the correct order. Try this experiment: take two sheets of scrap paper and fold them in quarters, then slit along the top fold so you can turn the pages. Now number them 1 to 16. That's the easy bit. Take the pages apart and look at the numbers – you'll have page 16 on the left and page 1 on the right. Turn that sheet over and you'll have page 2 on the left and page 15 on the right and that's the order in which you'll have to print them to make a booklet.

But imagine if you're writing out the text and have to begin page one on the right hand side of the first sheet and come back to that same sheet to write the last page of text on the left hand side, plus getting it right for every pair of pages in between: 14 & 3; 4 & 13, etc. And that's just for sixteen pages. Some text books have dozens of quarto

gatherings sewn together and I've seen unfinished manuscripts where the sheets weren't slit along the top edge until after the text was written, so four pages had to be written on each side of a sheet – two of them upside down! If that's not making life difficult for yourself, I don't know what is.

Unsurprisingly, collating the pages once they were written was a major part of making and binding books. Suppose you have ten beautifully written separate quarto gatherings to sew together in the correct order; how can you be sure to get the order right? You've all heard of a 'catchphrase' and this is where catchphrases are used. Let's say the bottom of page 16 of your first gathering ends but although the story... The top line of page 17 [the first of the next gathering] begins ...was published in a pamphlet... you ensure these marry up by writing was published way down in the bottom margin of page 16 and writing the story in the top corner of the margin on page 17. These are the phrases that ensure your gatherings catch together in the correct sequence. Occasionally in manuscripts, these catchphrases are still there but usually they were trimmed off before the final binding, although I've seen them in Victorian printed books too.

### **Discovering the Guildhall & Courtroom.**

While in Sandwich, newly-stitched notebooks in hand, we visited the Elizabethan Guildhall and Courtroom – the latter was used for judicial proceedings until 1987 and everything is still in place. There is a special bench for the press with a sort of





View of the Guildhall from the  
Cattle Market [GRM 2021]

large letterbox on the wall behind it, marked 'PRESS'. This was where the reporters would post out their news bulletins to runners waiting outside who would rush the latest scandalous and sensational happenings in court out to the pamphleteers, news-sheets and ballad-mongers to print up. The Elizabethan internet!

I stood in the defendant's box to hear sentence passed upon me for being 'a scold'. Fortunately, I was only condemned to two duckings on the ducking-stool, not a one-way trip to the gallows. The special back entrance which led straight to the gibbet and the pond is still there – now a car park.

The jury box is set up high, opposite the press bench, so the

jurors – always male only – had a good view of the proceedings. When we visited, there were silk flowers all around, left from a wedding held in the Courtroom. They looked incongruous but our guide, Catherine, told us records show that herbs were often put out in the same way when the court was in session, to spare the noses of the officials from the gaol-house stench of the accused. I hope I didn't smell too bad because we had only walked past the gaol-house in St Peter's Street. It's now a private house but it's still called 'The Gaol House'. I wouldn't fancy giving that as my address on an official form.

Everything that is part of the Courtroom furnishings is either



Awaiting sentence – the PRESS  
'letterbox' is over my left shoulder  
[GRM 2021]

removable, hinged and/or foldable. The jury box folds up like a huge deckchair to fit back against the wall. Only the judge's bench is permanently in place on the dais. The movable fittings are beautifully designed so the chamber can be cleared and used as the guildhall for council meetings, feast days and celebrations. The Mayor of Sandwich still sits in the chair on special occasions and we learned that he wears black mourning robes – not scarlet like most mayors in full regalia. His mourning dress is in remembrance of the dreadful attack by 4,000 French in 1457. The townsfolk fought valiantly and won the day but hundreds were killed, including the mayor, John Drury, who led the spirited defence of Sandwich.

The guildhall was built in 1579 although the royal arms behind the judge's bench is that of King James I and the mayor's chair dates to 1561 and

## OUNT

was carved by Simon Linch. There is also a screen dating from 1300 because Sandwich has a long history.

### Queen Elizabeth I's royal visit

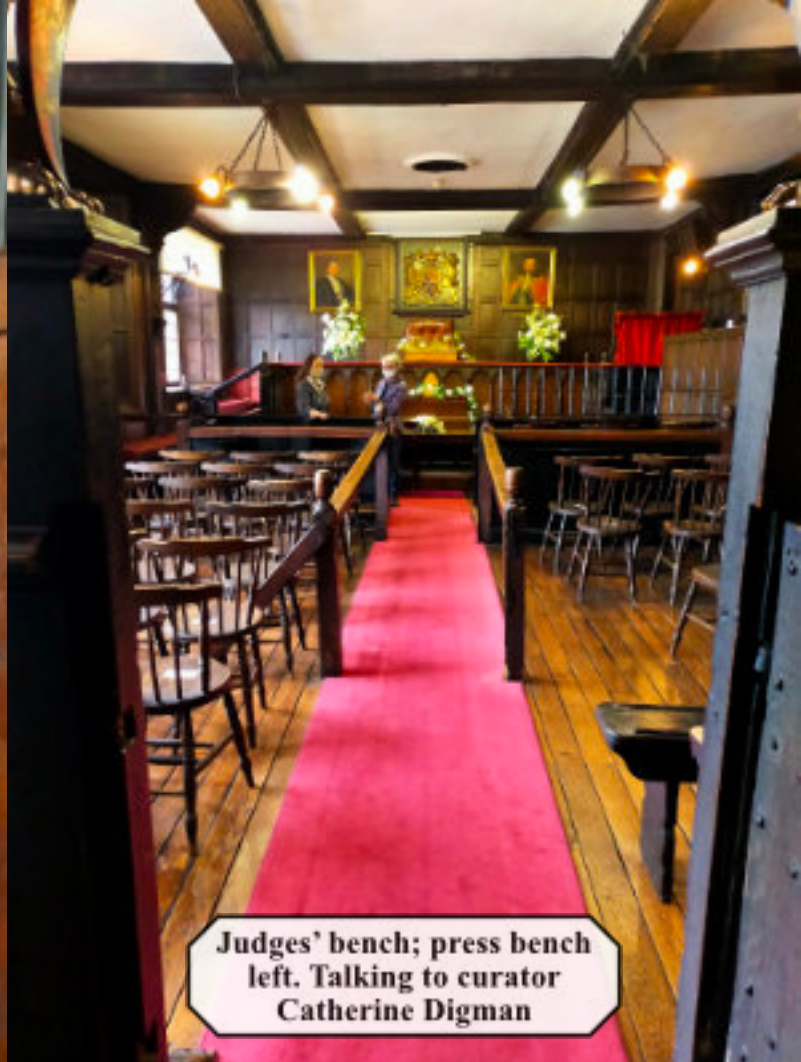
When Queen Elizabeth I came on an official visit in 1573, Sandwich was still an important port, one of the Cinque Ports, used by traders and the navy. The halberds which now hang from the ceiling beams belonged to the Cinque Ports Fleet. Sadly, the queen wouldn't have seen the Guildhall which wasn't yet built and the town had not fully recovered from the French attack of more than a century before. Many of the outlying churches and their parishes had been devastated and declining trade, as a result of the river silting up, meant there was little money for rebuilding. The citizens had begged Henry VIII to aid the town but he made promises that were never kept although he did 'gift' them some of the precious plate and jewels he looted from the three most ruinous parish churches in 1531.

Despite the town's problems, a huge effort was made to impress Her Majesty during the royal three day visit of 1573. She was greeted by the mayor, John Gylbart, and leading citizens at the Sandown Gate. The queen's heraldic beasts, specially made to decorate the gate for her arrival, can still be seen in the Courtroom. The brewers were instructed not to cut corners in their beer brewing and the butchers were told to remove any offal far outside town, so as not to offend the royal sense of smell. Two hundred white doublets, black gally gascoynes [or galligaskins, loose-fitting breeches] and white 'garders' [garters?] were tailored to kit out





The fold-away jury box  
[GRM 2021]



Judges' bench; press bench  
left. Talking to curator  
Catherine Digman

the townsmen. Streets were paved and householders commanded to decorate their houses with banners, bunting and streamers. The mayor gave the queen a gold cup worth £100 and an ornamented copy of the New Testament in Greek to emphasis their respect for her learning.

Because there was no Guildhall as yet, a feast was set out in the School House [then the Grammar School founded by Sir Roger Manwood in 1563, now Manwood Court] on a table twenty-eight feet long. A hundred-and-sixty dishes were served. Her Majesty 'was very merrie and did eate of dyvers dishes without any assaye'. Eating without any assay was an act of great trust shown by the queen because 'assaying' was the testing of everything for the presence of poison: not only the food and drink but napkins,

tablecloths and even the water used to wash her hands. After the feast, she had some of the leftovers taken to her lodgings [now known as King's Lodging] for supper later – the Elizabethan doggy-bag.

In 1906, a commemorative stained-glass window was installed at the Guildhall, marking Queen Elizabeth's visit and her welcome at Sandown Gate. Unfortunately, the artist didn't get his facts correct concerning the regalia worn by the mayor on his knees before the sovereign. As we've seen, the Mayor of Sandwich wears mourning black, not red robes.

Also unfortunately, despite the citizens going to so much effort to impress Elizabeth, their pleas for practical help to save the port from silting-up any further by bringing in Dutchmen skilled in 'waterworks' fell



on deaf ears. The queen's promise to consider the matter came to no more than her father's before her. Sandwich's importance as a port dwindled which is probably the reason why so many of its centuries-old buildings haven't been destroyed or modernised beyond recognition – luckily for us today.

The King's Lodging, Strand Street

Queen Elizabeth stayed in this grand house during her three-day visit to Sandwich although the brick gateway is believed to have been put in for an earlier royal Tudor visit by Henry VIII in 1534, judging from the size of bricks and style of laying them. However, the wooden gates themselves have come from the old Gaol House. Despite a date of 1713 on the front of the house, this was when new windows were put in and new brickwork done, the double house dates to around 1400. It stands on Jesus Quay in Strand Street and both the building and the quay

originally belonged to Christchurch Canterbury as accommodation for pilgrims to the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. After the Reformation, King's Lodging [also noted in some sources as King's House] was no longer church property and was used by important visitors to Sandwich, although I haven't been able to discover if it actually belonged to the Crown but its name suggests it may have done.

When Queen Elizabeth stayed here, there was a great hall and kitchen in the western range of the house, both open to the roof, as the huge soot-stained roof beams show. The eastern range was a dormitory on three floors, ideal as either a pilgrims' hotel or lodgings with enough rooms for the royal entourage. At the time of her visit, the walls of the best chambers had high quality linen-fold oak panelling to help keep out the draughts, as well as looking good. Sadly, the panelling was sold to America by a later owner, along with the 'Queen-Elizabeth-slept-here' four-poster bed and other Tudor memorabilia connected to both royal visits.

We had a most enjoyable day and Sandwich is well worth a visit if you're ever in East Kent.

P.S. And, no, it's not a joke but I found this photo on the Sandwich Local History Society website during my research. It's worth a smile at least:

**TONI MOUNT**

My special thanks go to Alex Summers for a fascinating morning of book-binding. And also to museum curator Catherine Digman for taking the time to let us look round the Guildhall and Courtroom, showing us the intriguing nooks and crannies and answering all our questions.





View of King's Lodging  
showing the Tudor Gateway  
with Gaol House gates



HAM  
SANDWICH 3  $\frac{1}{2}$

PINGLESHAM  
HEAL 4  $\frac{1}{2}$

NORTHBOURNE 1  $\frac{1}{2}$   
DOVER 9

# THE TUDOR SOCIETY



## *Members' Bulletin*

Welcome to 2021 and an ever-growing Tudor Society!

We're thrilled to have you with us for another year and to have an action-packed calendar of Tudor events for you to enjoy. Our magazine themes for the coming year include this one – Catholicism – and also Protestantism, but then we move onto subjects like murder, chief ministers, summer and even popular culture. The regular contributors and our occasional contributors are busy writing and researching to give you the best they possibly can.

January's expert speakers, Ashley and Laura, have been members of the Tudor Society for a long time and it's through their passion for Tudor history that they began their quest to work out who the famous portrait once claimed to be Catherine Howard might actually be. We may never know for sure, but their research and conclusions are compelling. Do comment back on their talk to let us know what you think about the subject.

In February we have Sarah Gristwood in an interview-style talk with Claire Ridgway on the subject of courtly love, and the conclusions might shock you. And we have Adam Pennington talking about the Pole family in March – this is one to look out for. April brings us JoAnn DellaNeva on Lancelot de Carle's poem about Anne Boleyn. All Boleyn family fans will want to see this one. This brings me onto something I wanted to highlight to you – all of our expert speakers spend time in the Tudor Society chatroom at a pre-advertised time so that you can chat with them. It's our mission to bring experts to you as a member, so please please do make the most of your membership by coming along to our online chats. You can lurk or ask questions and you'll definitely enjoy your time with our experts.

Well, once again, here's to a wonderful and healthy and Tudor-filled 2022.

**TIM RIDGWAY**



# Charlie

## Elizabeth I's Last Favourite

Sarah-Beth Watkins



Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, was one of the many favourites of Elizabeth I. After she lost Robert Dudley, his stepson was a natural choice to fill his shoes and, at least for a while, was a distraction for the ageing queen. So what caused things to go so wrong and his head to end up on the block? In her latest work, *Elizabeth I's Last Favourite*, Sarah-Beth Watkins examines the life of Essex and his tumultuous relationship with the Virgin Queen.

The author starts by looking at the rumours surrounding Essex's parentage, as there was some question as to whether he was really the son of Robert Dudley instead of Walter Devereux. This would further explain his closeness with Elizabeth I and Watkins does a good job at looking at this from the various angles, before moving on to his life in general and his relationship with Elizabeth:

'Although Essex received benefits from Leicester's death he would never truly supplant him in the affections of the queen. He would never become her 'eyes' as his stepfather had been and she would never give him a nickname of endearment although she sometimes called him Robin. Still she wanted him close by and refused his request to join an expedition to Spain and Portugal commanded by Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Norris. He irritated and infuriated her but he also entertained her and

somewhat filled the gap in her life created by Leicester's death.'

Unfortunately, the references in this book are not great, as there are no page numbers and just titles of each work, but that is to be expected by now, as it is the same with the author's other works. This is despite numerous quotes from contemporary accounts and so is still a disappointment. It is also a surprisingly small book, despite his eventful life. It does, however, include an appendix with his last poem, which is a nice addition.

*Elizabeth I's Last Favourite* is easy to read and will be useful to anyone who knows little about the life of the second Earl of Essex. What lets this book down is the lack of references, even though the author has clearly put a lot of work into this, and as such the uncertainty as to who it is truly aimed at. The appendix and sources throughout, as well as some attempt at referencing, suggest a more academic audience than can really use this book. As a guide, it is still engaging, like the rest of the author's works, and I would still recommend it if you enjoyed her other books and wanted a brief biography of the Earl of Essex.



# Our Books



# Cecily

Annie Garthwaite



The Wars of the Roses has inspired numerous novels over the years, some focusing on key historical people and others using the events purely as a background for their own characters.

Annie Garthwaite has done the latter, writing about the life of Cecily Neville, the wife of Richard, Duke of York. Her debut novel follows Cecily from when she marries Richard and ends just after the Battle of Wakefield in 1460, spanning approximately thirty years.

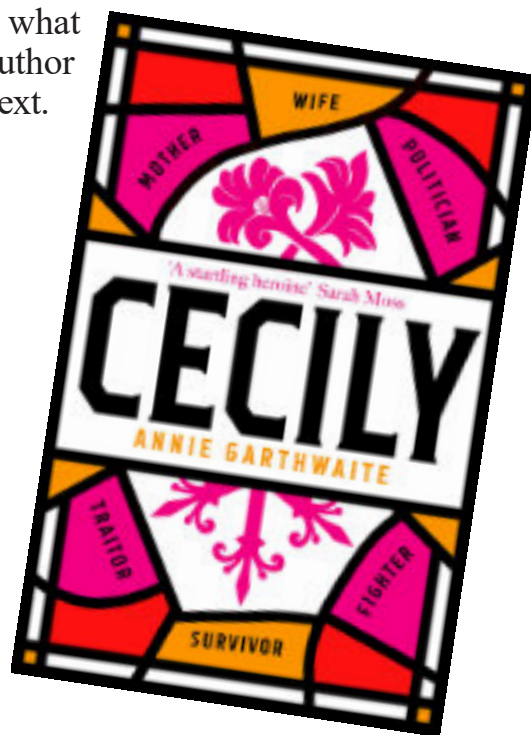
The novel starts with a powerful scene of Cecily watching the burning of Joan of Arc, which sears into both Cecily and the reader's minds what happens when a woman becomes too powerful. It is said to be a feminine telling of Cecily's story and it is easy to see that. However, that isn't necessarily a bad thing, as she was certainly a powerful woman who would have taken note of what other women, like Joan of Arc and, more importantly, Margaret of Anjou, were doing, 'Cecily watches them go. What lesson should she herself take? she wonders. Only that, if a woman takes up arms, she must be very sure of winning'.

The impact of the multiple pregnancies and subsequent losses of her children, either through natural causes or on the battlefield, is harrowing. There is still some light in the loving relationship we see between Cecily and Richard and the obvious bond she has with her children. The birth of the future Edward IV

is a major event in the novel, and, with the benefit of hindsight, the author cannot resist some foreshadowing:

'Cecily's son is named, not for the King, who has had his due, but for York. For Richard's uncle, from whom the dukedom came and, perhaps, for his long-dead grandfather, the third King Edward. And, while Henry faltered and is gone from her, this Edward thrives and stays. All the days Cecily lies healing, knitting flesh, she watches him. He feeds so hungrily he needs two wet nurses, sleeps deep, cries fiercely. And grows. The astrologers make much of the virile spring sun he has been born under and the preponderance of fire in his chart. They say it almost burned him up when he entered the world but is banked within him now. He will be bold, they tell her. Forward, lusty and strong.'

Cecily by Annie Garthwaite is a brilliant novel and I would strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the Wars of the Roses. Admittedly, it may be better for those who know some backstory to the events concerning, but it is an excellent book nonetheless. It contains several family trees for anyone who does need a reminder, as many people do share the same names and titles. Either way, Cecily is well-written and draws you into the story and life of Cecily Neville. I look forward to seeing what the author writes next.





# FOOD AS GIFTS IN TUDOR ENGLAND

By Brigitte Webster

**A**t Christmas, the traditional giving of a food hamper is still very much a popular choice today, together with the obligatory box of chocolate and a bottle of wine. In Tudor England, the exchange of food gifts was a means of maintaining relationships. In an age when not everybody was able to write, this exchange also provided a sense of community and intimacy that otherwise would have been difficult to sustain.

In the only surviving letter between Thomas Cromwell and his wife Elizabeth from 29th November 1525, he asks her to tell him who has visited her since his departure and with the letter sends her half a 'fat doe' (deer) as a token of appreciation. Not quite the romantic touch but surely a most welcome a token it was.

Various items of food were given as gifts between families, communities, companies & guilds, as well as within aristocratic circles.

The Tudors did not celebrate birthdays with presents but gifts of food, given throughout the year, created bonds and might have formed an accompaniment to negotiations, in the short or long term. The importance of social connection could be expressed in these bonds





## Orangeado



arising from the humble gifts of food. Those gifts, however, might link to eternal responsibilities and obligations. The wrong choice of food gifts could also offend the recipient as in the case of Bolognese painter Guido Reni, who was so upset about the cheese he was sent, that he returned it with the words that 'this was a gift worthy only of he who bore it' referring to the porters who delivered it.

Rewards paid to people for bringing gifts of food illustrate the role that this could play in supplying certain items. All received gifts were carefully recorded together with the payment disbursed to the giver - because the gifting of an item in Tudor England

was always considered a part of an 'exchange' and that was often the hope of winning favour. In some way, a little bit like the recording of Christmas cards received and sent out by return the year after, a behaviour I have witnessed even in modern society. To have your gift returned or perhaps worse, not to receive anything in return, was the most powerful way to publicly humiliate the giver as was the case when Henry VIII deliberately made no gift to Catherine of Aragon on January 1st 1532.

Food given as alms for the needy was a routine part of life in a great household, especially at Christmas time when Lords of the manner were meant to open their doors to the poor on their estate and provide them with a cooked meal.

Fruit was amongst the gifts that any man might give. In 1506, on May 21st King Henry VII's own gardener in Greenwich, was rewarded for bringing gifts of strawberries at least ten days before others delivered gifts of the same fruit. Humble gifts by poor people were also rewarded such as the woman who presented Elizabeth Willoughby with some nuts in September 1573 while riding out, who received 6d for her kind offering. Soon after, another poor woman was rewarded 6d for bringing apples. In 1574, Elizabeth Willoughby was the grateful recipient of a gift of cherries.



Gifts of chickens, capons, meat, pies and tarts appear fairly frequently in account and household books. Henry Avery obviously considered lamb an appropriate gift for his new master, Francis Willoughby when he visited Wollaton Hall in April 1565. Exotic imports such as turkey which had been



Preserved Pear

introduced to England in the 1520s, but not a common sight until the 1570s, featured highly on the list of prestigious food gifts. In October 1573, Elizabeth Willoughby received such a gift from a Mr Pate. The following September he sent four of the exotic birds.

Food gifts, particularly those from hunting and fishing expeditions, were a mark of special favour, as these foods had sumptuary characteristics: there were legal restrictions on taking beasts of the chase and game generally; and there was customary practice that restricted access to some foods by the early sixteenth century, for example wild birds. Venison was also highly prized and commonly reserved for royalty and those who owned a deer park, making it a highly regarded gift of food. Legal access to deer depended on owning a deer park or receiving it as presents. Legally, venison could not be bought or sold but the Willoughbys at Wollaton Hall would have been able to give venison as presents due to their own supply. A buck was killed there in 1598 and given away. William Harrison felt that deer parks were of little profit to their owners since they could not sell the deer and often ended up giving it away as a present. There are numerous entries in the dinner book of the London Drapers' Company for venison but the money spent appears as rewards, an indication that the deer was 'gifted'.

Royalty and aristocracy attracted luxury food gifts and the giver would win favour if the gift was accepted. These gifts, such as game and exotic fruit and spices were part of a social currency. Prestigious foods were always welcome, marking status and bestowing honour on both, the donor and the recipient. In the letters of the famous Norfolk based



A photograph showing two sugar cones on plates. The cone on the left is white and the one on the right is brown. They are both conical in shape and sit on dark, circular plates. The background is dark and out of focus.

## Sugar Cones

family, the Pastons, we notice gifts of swans and cranes being recorded and on one occasion in 1503 we find gifts of storks.

A monarch would also receive a string of food presents by commoners wherever they travelled. These gifts tended to be taken from the land and livestock of locals who

sent them to the monarch with either a servant or themselves. Servants bringing expensive food gifts from their masters were well tipped.

Gifts of food for special occasions frequently featured game which always attracted rewards. Some species of fish were also viewed as high status food gifts and most welcome for fish days and during Lent. Henry Willoughby received salmon from Lord Dudley in 1521 and in October 1542, two pickerels were given to John Willoughby by Henry Bracebridge as a gift from his uncle Thomas, a Warwickshire gentleman. The former guardian of Francis Willoughby received a bream as a present from William Nixon of Nottingham in April 1562 and in 1565, he received a pike from Sir Gervase Clifton, together with other fresh fish from Sir John Byron. Like their deer parks, fishponds allowed them to participate in the exchange of gifts with the country and regional elite.

Interestingly, the association of the mistress of the house with gifts of garden produce such as fruit and vegetables are confirmed by the fact, that such were always directed to Elizabeth Willoughby and presents of game to her husband. Lady Clifton was sent pears and artichokes, Sir Thomas Stanhope made her presents of cucumbers and artichokes as well as walnuts and quinces and Sir Anthony and Lady Strelley, friends from Nottinghamshire gifted her nuts, plums, pears and artichokes.

There is a clear rise in a number of different garden produce being given as gifts by the end of the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the century, presents of food other than meat or fish, were rare and less varied. Sometimes the rarity was in that the fruit was early or late for their season. Effective storing techniques would make the gift of



apples in the spring a real treat. In 1520 people were rewarded for bringing gifts of walnuts and quinces and in 1566 for plums, quinces and



Warden-pear Pie

medlars to the Willoughbys. There are also records of pears being gifted from unnamed farmers and a melon received from Mrs Underne, the wife of the local clergyman in 1574. The wives of tenants sometimes brought apple dishes such as pie and tart but this was more expected from gentlemen and wealthier yeomen and husbandsmen as it involved the use of sugar, still being an expensive ingredient.

Home-produced remedies were also considered as a worthy gift of food. Sir Anthony Strelley's gardener was rewarded for presenting a gift of aqua vitae in October 1573 to Francis Willoughby.

Lucky for the English women of aristocracy, they were never the subject of legislation that controlled gifts of sweet comfort food such as in Lucca (Italy) where it was forbidden to give the gift of sweetmeats to a woman during her confinement. All sorts of banqueting food, sweetmeats as well as sugar cones were the not only one of the most desired but also the most costly food gifts one could give. In the account of William Chancy for Robert Dudley from 1558-9, the Earl of Leicester is the lucky recipient of a sugar cone which was sent via a servant of Sir John York and rewarded with 3s and 5d.

One of the most popular times of gift exchanging for the Tudors was New Year's Day. The Willoughbys received much poultry, usually capons, as gifts for New Year. In 1573, Elizabeth Willoughby received



garden seeds by Sir Anthony Strelley's gardener for New Year<sup>15</sup>. The New Year's gift exchange was certainly a well-defined royal custom by the time of the first Tudor monarch. Queen Elizabeth was the lucky recipient of a number of edible New Year's gifts – sometimes in the barrels such as Oranges but her sweet 'tooth' made sure, that treats like marchpane, comfits, sirup, sugar loaves, conserves, quince pastry, marmalade, 'fare made' quince and orange pies, gilded peaches from Geneva, 'gynger candy' or a 'pot of Abricockes' by Edward Hemingway in 1582, were send her way. Other fresh fruit listed are cherries, and preserved pears, plums, pomegranate and apples. Interestingly but not surprisingly, in her earlier years, we still see several gifts of spices like cinnamon and nutmeg being made, which towards to end of her long reign are being replaced with sugar-work and marchpane creations. In 1603, her cook of the household sent her one marchpane, another pastry cook a pie of 'orangeado' but surely, the most fun treats to delight her tongue and eyes must have been the sugar-plate ship she received in 1599, a marchpane in form of Justice and Charitie in 1597 and a castle made from marchpane in 1584.

For me this year, it is homemade sweet treats for Christmas presents: marmalade, macaroons, preserves and marchpane. Hopefully the recipients reward the messenger aka postman or courier person handsomely. Let's bring back some Tudor Christmas and New Year's spirit!

**BRIGITTE WEBSTER**

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